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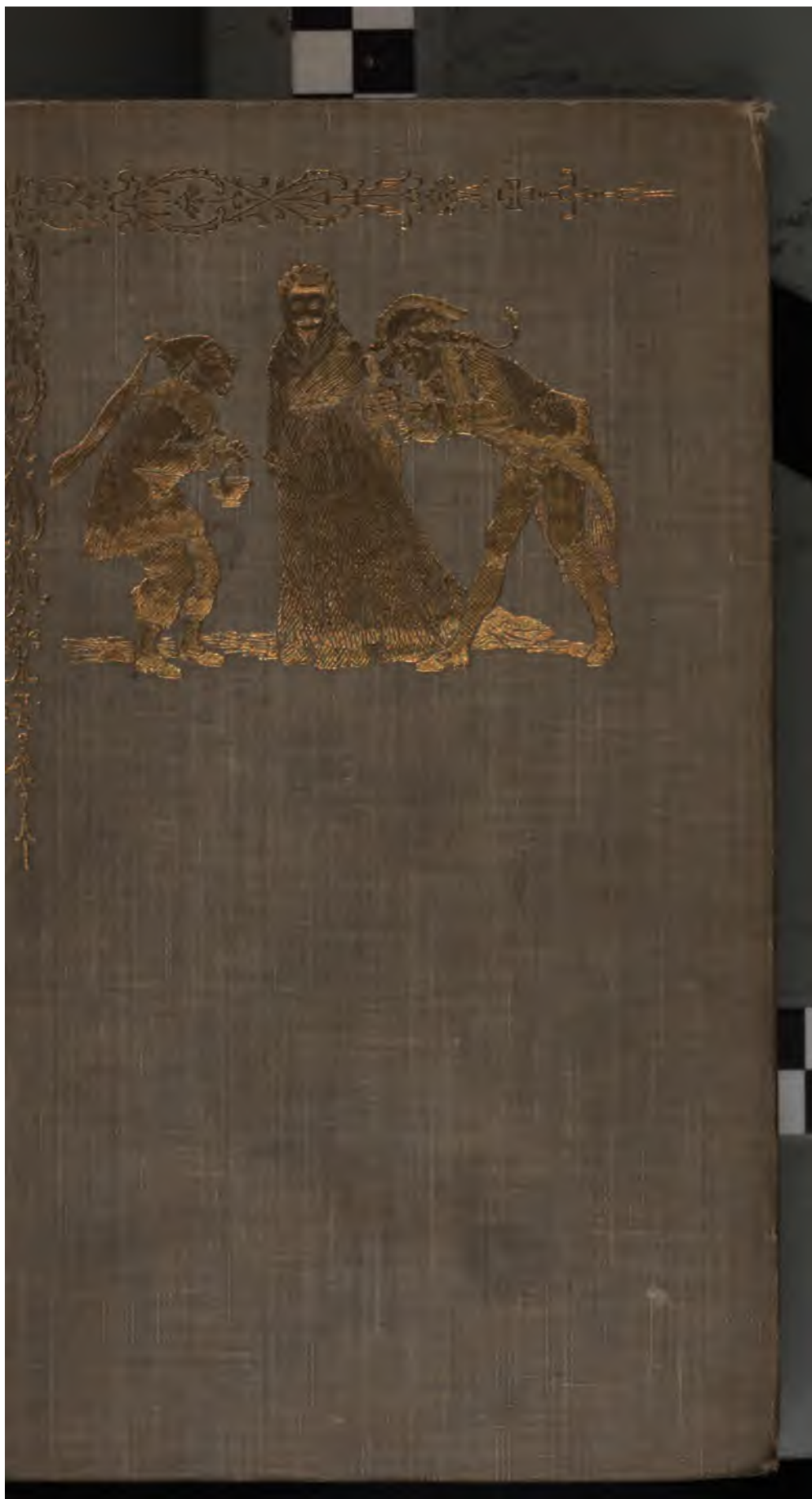
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**The
Italian Novelists**

Volume Four



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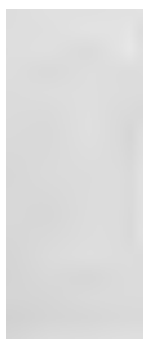
W. G. WATERS

CHOICELY ILLUSTRATED BY

E. R. HUGHES, A.R.W.S., LONDON

IN SEVEN VOLUMES
VOLUME IV.

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The Novice's Terrifying Adventure

Right the Thirteenth

ELEVENTH FABLE



The Novice's Terrible Adventure

By the Author of "The Novice's Terrible Adventure"

ALBANY: J. B. KNEELAND, 1884.

THE
Facetious Nights
OF
STRAPAROLA

NOW FIRST TRANSLATED INTO
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JANUARY 27, 1933

THE FACETIOUS NIGHTS
OF GIOVANNI FRANCESCO
STRAPAROLA * * * * *

CONSISTS OF AN EXQUISITE AND DELIGHTFUL COLLECTION OF HUMOROUS WITTY AND MIRTHFUL CONVERSATIONS FABLES AND ENIGMAS INCLUDING SINGING MUSIC AND DANCING

DURING THE THIRTEEN NIGHTS
OF THE CARNIVAL AT VENICE

AS RELATED BY TEN CHARMING AND ACCOMPLISHED DAMSELS AND SEVERAL NOBLES MEN OF LEARNING ILLUSTRIOUS AND HONORABLE GENTLEMEN OF NOTE AT THE ENTERTAINMENTS OF MERRIMENT AND PLEASURE

GIVEN BY THE PRINCESS LUCRETIA
AT HER BEAUTIFUL PALACE AT
MURANO



Right the Eleventh.



Night the Eleventh.

THE shadowy night, nursing mother of the world's fatigues, had already fallen, and the wearied beasts and birds had gone to rest, when the gentle and amiable company of dames and cavaliers, putting aside all sombre thoughts, betook themselves to the accustomed meeting-place. Then, after the damsels had danced divers measures according to the rule of the assemblage, the vase was brought forth, and out of it, by chance, was first drawn the name of Fiordiana. Next came that of Lionora, then that of Diana, then that of Isabella, and lastly that of Vicenza.

When the instruments of music had been brought and tuned, the Signora gave the word to Molino and the Tre-

visan to sing a canzonet, and these two
without delay sang as follows :

SONG.

The soft enchantment of your face,
Your beauty and your dainty grace,
Your eye, which neither coy nor bold,
 Can work its roguish spell,
And, pretty thief, keep close in hold
 My life, my death as well.

To lures like these I fall a prey,
They charm and bind me 'neath their sway,
And vanquished by their radiance quite
 I willing own thy power,
And kiss my chains by day, by night,
 Until my dying hour.

Lives there a man from pole to pole,
So base and churlish in his soul,
So barbarous and dour a wight,
 Who, might he once be blest
To gaze upon your bosom bright,
 Where love hath made his nest,

Would fail to turn from hot to cold,
Now chill with doubt, now overbold
With strong desire to call thee dear,
 And yet be doubtful still,
If burning hope or chilling fear
 Could wake the keenest thrill ?

Whose breast, now soothed with love's delight,
Now vexed with doubts that burn and bite ;
Would not each hour send forth anew
 Its sighs their tale to tell —
Sighs which might soften and subdue
 The lion fierce and fell ?

Nor all impatient would implore
Both men and gods whom men adore,
The heaven, the earth, the shining stars,
 The ocean deep and vast,
To end forthwith these cruel wars,
 And give him peace at last ?

This sweet and lovely song, sung by
Molino and the Trevisan, pleased might-
ily the whole company. So strong was
its pathetic charm that it brought certain
soft tears from the eyes of a certain one
towards whom it was especially directed.
And then, in order to begin at once the
story-telling for the evening, the Signora
bade Fiordiana to commence, and the
latter, having made her due salutation,
told the story which follows.

THE FIRST FABLE.

Soriana dies and leaves three sons, Dusolino, Tesifone, and Costantino. The last-named, by the aid of his cat, gains the lordship of a powerful kingdom.

IT is no rare event, beloved ladies, to see a rich man brought to extreme poverty, or to find one who from absolute penury has mounted to high estate. And this last-named fortune befell a poor wight of whom I have heard tell, who from being little better than a beggar attained the full dignity of a king.

There was once upon a time in Bohemia a woman, Soriana by name, who lived in great poverty with her three sons, of whom one was called Dusolino, and another Tesifone, and the third Costantino Fortunato. Soriana had nought of any value in the way of household goods save three things, and these were

a kneading trough of the kind women use in the making of bread, a board such as is used in the preparation of pastry, and a cat. Soriana, being now borne down with a very heavy burden of years, saw that death was approaching her, and on this account made her last testament, leaving to Dusolino, her eldest son, the kneading trough, to Tesifone the paste board, and to Costantino the cat. When the mother was dead and duly buried, the neighbours round about would borrow now the kneading trough and now the paste board, as they might happen to want them, and as they knew that the young men were very poor, they gave them by way of repayment a cake, which Dusolino and Tesifone ate by themselves, giving nothing of it to Costantino, the youngest brother. And if Costantino chanced to ask them to give him aught they would make answer by bidding him to go to his cat, who would without fail let him have what he wanted, and on this account poor Costantino and

his cat underwent much suffering. Now it chanced that this cat of Costantino's was a fairy in disguise, and the cat, feeling much compassion for him and anger at his two brothers on account of their cruel treatment of him, one day said to him, 'Costantino, do not be cast down, for I will provide for your well-being and sustenance, and for my own as well.' Whereupon the cat sallied forth from the house and went into the fields, where it lay down and feigned to be asleep so cleverly that an unsuspecting leveret came close up to where it was lying, and was forthwith seized and killed.

Then, carrying the leveret, the cat went to the king's palace, and having met some of the courtiers who were standing about it, said that it wanted to speak to the king. When the king heard that a cat had begged an audience with him, he bade them bring it into his presence, and, having asked it what its business was, the cat replied that Costantino, its master, had sent a leveret

as a present to the king, and begged his gracious acceptance of the same. And with these words it presented the leveret to the king, who was pleased to accept it, asking at the same time who this Costantino might be. The cat replied that he was a young man who for virtue and good looks had no superior, and the king, on hearing this report, gave the cat a kindly welcome, and ordered them to set before it meat and drink of the best. The cat, when it had eaten and drunk enough, dexterously filled the bag in which it had brought the leveret with all sorts of good provender, when no one was looking that way, and having taken leave of the king, carried the spoil back to Costantino.

The two brothers, when they saw Costantino making good cheer over the victuals, asked him to let them have a share, but he paid them back in their own coin, and refused to give them a morsel, wherefore on this account the brothers hereafter were tormented with

gnawing envy of Costantino's good fortune. Now Costantino, though he was a good-looking youth, had suffered so much privation and distress that his face was rough and covered with blotches, which caused him much discomfort; so the cat having taken him one day down to the river, washed him and licked him carefully with its tongue from head to foot, and tended him so well that in a few days he was quite freed from his ailment. The cat still went on carrying presents to the royal palace in the fashion already described, and by these means got a living for Costantino.

But after a time the cat began to find these journeyings to and from the palace somewhat irksome, and it feared moreover that the king's courtiers might become impatient thereanent; so it said to Costantino, 'My master, if you will only do what I shall tell you, in a short time you will find yourself a rich man.' 'And how will you manage this?' said Costantino. Then the cat answered, 'Come

with me, and do not trouble yourself about anything, for I have a plan for making a rich man of you which cannot fail.' Whereupon the cat and Costantino betook themselves to a spot on the bank of the river which was hard by the king's palace, and forthwith the cat bade its master to strip off all his clothes and to throw himself into the river. Then it began to cry and shout in a loud voice, 'Help, help, run, run, for Messer Costantino is drowning!' It happened that the king heard what the cat was crying out, and bearing in mind what great benefits he had received from Costantino, he immediately sent some of his household to the rescue. When Costantino had been dragged out of the water and dressed by the attendants in seemly garments, he was led into the presence of the king, who gave him a hearty welcome, and inquired of him how it was that he found himself in the water; but Costantino, on account of his agitation, knew not what reply to make; so the cat,

who always kept at his elbow, answered in his stead, 'You must know, O king! that some robbers, who had learned by the agency of a spy that my master was taking a great store of jewels to offer them to you as a present, laid wait for him and robbed him of his treasure, and then, wishing to murder him, they threw him into the river, but by the aid of these gentlemen he has escaped death.' The king, when he heard this, gave orders that Costantino should enjoy the best of treatment, and seeing that he was well made and handsome, and believing him to be very rich, he made up his mind to give him his daughter Elisetta to wife, and to endow her with a rich dowry of gold and jewels and sumptuous raiment.

When the nuptial ceremonies were completed and the festivities at an end, the king bade them load ten mules with gold and five with the richest garments, and sent the bride, accompanied by a great concourse of people, to her husband's house. Costantino, when he saw

himself so highly honoured and loaded with riches, was in sore perplexity as to where he should carry his bride, and took counsel with the cat thereanent. Said the cat: 'Be not troubled over this business, my master; we will provide for everything.' So as they were all riding on merrily together the cat left the others and rode on rapidly in advance, and after it had left the company a long way behind, it came upon certain cavaliers whom it thus addressed: 'Alas! you poor fellows, what are you doing here? Get hence as quickly as you can, for a great body of armed men is coming along this road and will surely attack and despoil you. See, they are now quite near; listen to the noise of the neighing horses.' Whereupon the horsemen, overcome with fear, said to the cat: 'What then shall we do?' and the cat made answer: 'It will be best for you to act in this wise. If they should question you as to whose men you are, you must answer boldly that you serve Mes-

ser Costantino, and then no one will molest you.' Then the cat left them, and, having ridden on still farther, came upon great flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, and it told the same story and gave the same counsel to the shepherds and drovers who had charge of these. Then going on still farther it spake in the same terms to whomsoever it chanced to meet.

As the cavalcade of the princess passed on, the gentlemen who were accompanying her asked of the horsemen whom they met the name of their lord, and of the herdsmen who might be the owner of all these sheep and oxen, and the answer given by all was that they served Messer Costantino. Then the gentlemen of the escort said to the bridegroom: 'So, Messer Costantino, it appears we are now entering your dominions?' and Costantino nodded his head in token of assent, and in like manner he made answer to all their interrogations, so that all the company on this account judged him to be enormously rich. In the

meantime the cat had ridden on and had come to a fair and stately castle, which was guarded by a very weak garrison, and these defenders the cat addressed in the following words: 'My good men, what is it you do? Surely you must be aware of the ruin which is about to overwhelm you.' 'What is the ruin you speak of?' demanded the guards. 'Why, before another hour shall have gone by,' replied the cat, 'your place will be beleaguered by a great company of soldiers, who will cut you in pieces. Do you not already hear the neighing of the horses and see the dust in the air? Wherefore, unless you are minded to perish, take heed to my advice, which will bring you safely out of all danger. For if anyone shall demand of you whose this castle is, say that it belongs to Messer Costantino Fortunato.' And when the time came the guards gave answer as the cat had directed; for when the noble escort of the bride had arrived at the stately castle, and certain gentlemen

had inquired of the guards the name of the lord of the castle, they were answered that it was Messer Costantino Fortunato; and when the whole company had entered the castle they were honourably lodged therein.

Now the lord of this castle was a certain Signor Valentino, a very brave soldier, who only a few days ago had left his castle to bring back thereto the wife he had recently espoused, but as ill-fortune would have it, there happened to him on the road, somewhere before he came to the place where his beloved wife was abiding, an unhappy and unforeseen accident by which he straightway met his death. So Costantino Fortunato retained the lordship of Valentino's castle. Not long after this Morando, King of Bohemia, died, and the people by acclamation chose Costantino Fortunato for their king, seeing that he had espoused Elisetta, the late king's daughter, to whom by right the succession to the kingdom belonged. And by these means

The Cavalier Of Constantinople
And His Friends

By the Author of "The Cavalier Of Constantinople"

First Edition

The Cavalcade Of Constantino
And Elisetta

Eight the Eleventh

FIRST FABLE





Costantino rose from an estate of poverty or even beggary to be a powerful king, and lived long with Elisetta his wife, leaving children by her to be the heirs of his kingdom.

The fable told by Fiordiana gave great pleasure to all the company, and the Signora, in order that time might not be wasted, gave her command to propose her riddle forthwith, and the damsel in a sprightly ready spirit told it in the following terms :

Through a flowery garden gay,
A red and a white rose run alway ;
Unwearied ever along they fare,
And sparkle bright beyond compare.
There stands in the midst an oak-tree tall,
From which twelve branches spring and fall ;
And every branch from out its store
Gives acorns four, and gives no more.

Amongst the company there was no one found who could interpret this obscure riddle, and although one affirmed it to mean this and another that, nevertheless all their solutions were faulty.

Wherefore Fiordiana, perceiving that her enigma was like to remain unsolved, said: "Ladies and gentlemen, by my enigma I meant to shadow forth nothing else than the planetary system, which may well be likened to a garden filled with flowers, that is to say, the stars. Through it there runs a red rose, which is the sun, and a white rose, which is the moon, and these both by night and by day keep on their course shining bright and illuminating the universe. And in the midst of this system is planted an oak, which is the year, having twelve branches to typify the twelve months. On each branch grow four acorns, the four weeks."

When the listeners heard this, the real solution of Fiordiana's clever enigma, they all gave it the highest praise, and Lionora, who sat in the next seat, without waiting for any further command from the Signora, began her story.

THE SECOND FABLE.

Xenofonte, a notary, makes his will, and leaves to Bertuccio, his son, three hundred ducats, of which the young man spends one hundred in the purchase of a dead body, and two hundred in the ransom of the daughter of Crisippo, King of Nobarra, Tarquinia by name, whom he afterwards takes to wife.



HERE is a common proverb which teaches us that we shall never be losers by the performance of any kindly act, and that this proverb is a true one is clearly shown by what happened to the son of a certain notary, who, though on one occasion he was censured by his mother for spending (as she deemed) his money amiss, was in the end commended by her, and was enabled to bring the affair to an issue pleasing to both of them.

In Trino, a village of Piamonte, there lived in times now some years ago, a

notary, a discreet and intelligent man, called by name Xenofonte, who had one son fifteen years of age named Bertuccio, a youth who was by nature more simpleton than sage. It happened that one day Xenofonte fell ill, and, seeing that the end of his life was now drawing near, he made his last will, according to which instrument he appointed Bertuccio his lawfully-born son his heir, as it was natural that he should do, making, however, this condition, that he should not be permitted to enjoy full and uncontrolled possession of his estate until he should have attained his thirtieth year. In mitigation of this, however, he expressed a wish that when Bertuccio should be twenty-five years of age there should be handed over to him three hundred ducats of his wealth wherewith to trade and barter.

After the testator's death, when Bertuccio's twenty-fifth birthday had come, the young man demanded of his mother, who was the executrix of his father's

will, that she should hand over to him one hundred ducats out of the above-named sum. The mother, who could not deny his request, seeing that it was according to her husband's intention, at once gave him the money, begging him at the same time to employ it with prudence and judgment, and by the use of it make some gain for himself whereby they might be able to keep a better household. To this request of his mother Bertuccio replied that he would not fail to put it to a use which would satisfy her.

Having received his money, Bertuccio set out upon his travels, and as he journeyed he one day encountered a thief who had just slain a merchant on the public highway, and, although the poor man was quite dead, the robber still continued to strike and wound him afresh. When Bertuccio saw what the ruffian was doing, he was greatly moved to pity, and cried out, 'What is it you do, my good man? Do you not see that he is dead already?' Whereupon the high-

wayman, with his hands all stained with blood, cried out in an angry voice, 'Get you gone from here as quickly as you can, for your own good. If you do not, you will meet with something not to your taste.' Then said Bertuccio, 'Brother, are you willing to hand over to me the corpse of this dead man? If you will let me have it, I will pay you well for it.' The highwayman said, 'How much will you give me for it?' 'I will give you therefor fifty ducats,' replied Bertuccio. 'This is a very small sum of money compared with the value of the corpse,' said the highwayman. 'If you wish to have it, it shall be yours for eighty ducats.' Bertuccio, who was of a kindly, charitable nature, at once paid over to the highwayman eighty ducats, and having hoisted the dead body on his shoulders, he carried it off to a neighbouring church and there caused it to be honourably buried, leaving likewise the residue of the hundred ducats to be spent in sacred offices and in masses for

the repose of the soul of the murdered man.

Bertuccio, being now stripped of all his money and having nothing in his purse wherewith to live, went back to his home, and when his mother saw him approaching she deemed that he must have made some money; so she went to meet him, inquiring of him how he had fared in his trafficking. He replied that he had prospered mightily; whereupon his mother rejoiced greatly, giving thanks to God that He had at last endowed her son with intelligence and good sense. Said Bertuccio: 'Yesterday, my mother, I traded so well that I saved your soul and mine own also; therefore, whenever our souls may take flight from these our mortal bodies, they will go direct to Paradise.' And then he told her everything that he had done from beginning to end. As soon as his mother heard what he had to say, she was overcome with grief, and reproached him bitterly for his folly.

Before many days had passed Bertuccio once more approached his mother, and asked her to give him the rest of the three hundred ducats which his father had bequeathed to him. The mother, who was not able to gainsay this request of his, cried out as one in despair, 'Here are your two hundred ducats; take them, and do your worst with them, and never come back to this house again!' To this speech Bertuccio answered: 'Good mother, do not be afraid, but be of good cheer, for this time I will assuredly act so that you will be fully satisfied with me.' Whereupon the son, having taken his money, departed, and after he had travelled a short distance he came into a certain wood, where he chanced to meet two soldiers who had just captured Tarquinia, the daughter of Crisippo, King of Novarra. Between her two captors there had arisen a very sharp dispute as to which of them had the strongest claim on the person of their captive, and Bertuccio, when he came up to them, thus

addressed them, saying: 'Oh! my brothers, what is this thing you are doing? Would you cut one another's throats on account of this damsel? If you will only hand her over to me I will give you in return a guerdon which will assuredly satisfy both of you.' Hereupon the soldiers left off fighting the one with the other, and demanded of Bertuccio how much he would be inclined to give them if they would promise to leave the damsel at his disposal. To this he made answer that he would give them two hundred ducats.

The soldiers, knowing nothing of the fact that Tarquinia was the daughter of a king, and being, moreover, in fear of death on account of what they had done, took the two hundred ducats, which they shared in equal parts, and left the damsel in Bertuccio's keeping. The youth, greatly delighted that he had delivered the maiden, went back once more to his home and said to his mother: 'Oh! mother, you will have no cause this

time to make complaint that I have not spent my money to a good purpose, forasmuch as I, bearing in mind how solitary is the life you lead here, have purchased this damsel with the two hundred ducats you gave me, and have brought her home to you in order that she may bear you company.' The mother, when she perceived what her son had done, felt that this last freak of his was in truth more than she could bear; so turning towards him she began to assault him with bitter words and grave reproofs, wishing the while that he was lying dead before her, for the reason that in her sight he was nought else than the ruin and disgrace of the house. But the son, who was by disposition very gentle, did not let his anger be kindled by these words of his mother; on the other hand, he tried with peaceful speech to comfort her, affirming that he had done this thing entirely for love of her, and so that she might no longer live such a lonely life.



**Bertuccio Ransoms Tarquinia
From The Soldiers**

Night the Eleventh

SECOND FABLE





The King of Navarra, when he discovered that his daughter was lost, sent out a great quantity of soldiers in divers directions to see whether they could gather any news of her, and after they had diligently searched all the country over and over again, the news was brought to them that in the house of one Bertuccio da Trino in Piamonte there was abiding a maiden whom the said Bertuccio had bought for the sum of two hundred ducats. Whereupon the soldiers of the king forthwith took their way towards Piamonte, and having come there they sought out Bertuccio, of whom they inquired whether a certain maiden had fallen into his hands. To this Bertuccio replied, 'It is true that some days ago I bought a young girl from certain robbers into whose hands she had fallen, but who she may be I know not.' 'Where is she now?' asked the soldiers. 'She is in the keeping of my mother,' answered Bertuccio, 'who loves her as dearly as if she were her own child.' When they

had gone into Bertuccio's house the soldiers found the princess there, and for the reason that she was now meanly clad and thin and shrunken of visage through the many sufferings and hardships she had undergone, they scarcely knew her. But after they had gazed upon her for some time, and duly conned each feature, they were assured, from the description given of her, who she must be, and declared that in truth she was Tarquinia, the daughter of Crisippo, King of Navarra, rejoicing mightily the while that they had found her. Bertuccio, who was fully satisfied that what the soldiers said was the truth, cried out, 'Brethren, if the maiden be indeed the one ye seek, take her at once and conduct her home, for I am well content that it should be so.' But Tarquinia, before she took her departure, laid a command upon Bertuccio, that if at any time news should be brought to him how King Crisippo was about to give his daughter in marriage, he should straightway betake him-

self to Novarra, and when he should have come into the presence of the court, he should raise his right hand to his head to let her know that he was there, declaring in the end that she had resolved to have him for her husband, and no other man. Then, having bidden farewell to Bertuccio and his mother, she took her way back to Novarra.

The king, as soon as he beheld his daughter, who had been thus restored to him, wept plentifully for joy, and after many endearments and fatherly kisses he inquired of her how it was that she had been lost. Whereupon the damsel, weeping the while, told him all the circumstances as to how she had been captured by robbers, how these had sold her, and how, after all her perils, her virginity had been preserved. A short time after her return to her father's court Tarquinia recovered all her beauty, and became plump and fresh and lovely as a rose, whereupon King Crisippo let the report be spread abroad that he wished

to find a husband for his daughter. As soon as this news came to the ears of Bertuccio, he immediately took his way towards Novarra, mounted upon an old mare who was so lean that it would have been easy to count all the bones in her body.

As the good Bertuccio was thus riding along, equipped in a very scurvy fashion, he encountered a noble cavalier richly accoutred, and accompanied by a great train of followers. The cavalier, with a merry face, thus addressed Bertuccio: 'Where are you going all alone, my brother?' And to this Bertuccio replied, 'To Novarra.' 'And on what business are you bound?' said the cavalier. 'If you will listen to me I will tell you why I am making this journey,' said Bertuccio. 'Three months ago I delivered the daughter of the King of Novarra, who by ill-luck had been captured by robbers, and I ransomed her from their hands with my own money. Before she parted with me she laid a command upon

me, that as soon as I should hear the report that her father was about to give her in marriage, I should forthwith go to Novarra, and, having made my way to the royal palace, should lift my right hand to my head as a sign of my presence. She told me, likewise, that she would take no other man for her husband but me.' Then said the cavalier, 'But I, forsooth, will get there long before you, and will win the daughter of the king for my wife, for the reason that I am far better mounted than you, and clad in richer and more sumptuous apparel.' Then said the good Bertuccio, 'Go on your way, my lord, and good luck go with you! I shall rejoice at your good fortune as if it were my own.'

As soon as the cavalier saw how great was the urbanity, not to say the simplicity, of the young man, he said, 'Give me at once your clothes and the mare you are riding, and take in exchange this charger of mine and my rich clothes, and ride on to Novarra, and good luck

go with you ! But I make a condition, that when you return to me here you shall give me back my clothes and my horse, together with the half of whatever you may have won for yourself.' And Bertuccio made answer that he would agree to do all this.

Whereupon Bertuccio, mounted upon the noble horse and richly clad in the raiment of the cavalier, rode on to Novarra, and, having entered the city and reached the royal palace, he saw Crisippo the king standing on a balcony and looking down into the piazza. The king, when he remarked this handsome and well-favoured youth, so nobly mounted and accoutred, said within himself, ' Ah ! would to God that Tarquinia, my daughter, might be disposed to take this young man for her husband ! Then, indeed, I should be mightily well content.' After this he went down from the balcony into the audience chamber, where were gathered a great number of high nobility who had come to look upon the princess.

Bertuccio, having by this time dismounted from his horse, went into the palace and stationed himself amongst the humbler folk therein congregated. The king Crisippo, seeing that a very large number of gentlemen and cavaliers had now come together into the hall, bade them summon his daughter into his presence, and when she was come he thus addressed her: 'Tarquinia, you must know that a great number of noble gentlemen are here assembled to demand of me your hand in marriage. Now look round about you on every side, and consider well which one of all those you see here seems to please you best, and, when you have fixed on any certain one, he shall be your husband.' Tarquinia, as she walked through the hall, caught sight of Bertuccio, who held up his right hand to his head in the manner prescribed by her, and she knew him at once. Then, turning towards her father, she said, 'Sacred majesty, if it be your pleasure, I will take none other but this man for

my husband.' Thereupon the king, who desired as much as Tarquinia that this thing should come to pass, answered, 'Be it as you will.' And before the company dispersed the king caused the nuptials to be celebrated in the most sumptuous and magnificent fashion, to the great contentment and delight of bride and bridegroom alike.

And when the time came for Bertuccio to conduct his new spouse to his home, he mounted his horse, and, having come to the spot where he had first met the cavalier, he found him still abiding there. The cavalier straightway accosted him, and said, 'My brother, take now this mare of yours and your clothing, and give me back my horse and my garments, together with half of whatever you may have gained since we parted.' Whereupon Bertuccio, with good grace, gave up the horse and the accoutrements which belonged to the cavalier, and besides these handed over to him the half of whatever gift the king had bestowed upon him.

But the cavalier said, 'You have not yet given me the half of all that is my due, seeing that you have not divided with me your wife.' To this speech Bertuccio made answer, 'But in what manner will it be possible to divide her?' The cavalier said, 'Can we not cut her in half.' Then Bertuccio replied, 'Ah, my lord, it would be too great a sin and shame thus to slay such a woman! Rather than so wicked a deed should be done, and she be killed, take her all for your own, and lead her away, for I have already received benefits enough from your great courtesy.' The cavalier, when he perceived of what a simple and kindly nature Bertuccio was, said to him, 'Oh! my brother, take everything that I have, for all that you see here belongs to you, and I give you full possession of my horse, of all my raiment, of my treasure, and of my share in this fair lady. And now you must know that I myself am none other than the spirit of that man to whom you gave honourable sepulture

after he had been slain by a highway robber and on whose behalf you caused to be said many masses and other divine offices for the welfare of his soul. Wherefore I, as a recompense for the great service done by you, hand over to you everything I have, at the same time announcing to you that for you and for your good mother as well there are prepared habitations in Heaven above, where you will dwell in perpetual bliss.' And, having spoken these words, the spirit of the cavalier straightway disappeared.

After this Bertuccio returned to his home rejoicing, taking with him Tarquinia his bride, whom he presented to his mother, giving her at the same time a daughter-in-law and a daughter. The mother, having tenderly embraced Tarquinia, accepted her as her daughter, rendering thanks to the supreme Deity who had so beneficently worked on their behalf. And thus I declare at the end, as well as at the beginning of my story, that we shall never lose

anything by doing a kindly action to another.

As soon as Lionora had brought her fable to an end, she turned to the Signora and spake thus : "Signora, by your leave I will conform to the rule which we have observed from the beginning." And the Signora with a gracious smile bade her give her enigma.

I tell of one who succour gave
Another one from death to save ;
In these our days we sadly own,
Such kindly deeds full rare are grown.
Because Life battles aye with Death,
Men chide thereat, and waste their breath.
First hid the meaning was, but soon
Revealed the purpose of the boon.
Life sat upon a branch above,
And gently giving love for love,
Drew back from death the one below,
Her kindly shield from bitter foe.

There arose a great dispute concerning the real meaning of this skilfully-conceived enigma ; however, there was no one who was keen-witted enough to

hit the mark, so the prudent Lionora gave the interpretation thereof in this wise: "By the brink of a clear gushing spring there stood a thick-leaved tree, in the high branches of which was a bird's nest, full of lovely nestlings, over which the parent bird kept careful guard. It chanced that a youth who was passing by below caught sight of a serpent which was about to climb up into the tree, and killed it with his sword. Then the youth was seized with desire to get him to drink some of the water from the fountain, whereupon the mother of the nestlings he had saved from death befouled the water by casting down thereinto the dirt from her nest, and this thing she did again and again. The youth was mightily astonished at what he saw, and, having drawn up some of the water of the fountain, he gave it to a little dog he had with him to drink, and straightway the beast died by reason of the poisonous water it took. Then the youth understood how his life had

been preserved on account of what the bird had done." This excellent interpretation of Lionora's subtle enigma won high praise from all the company, and especially from Diana, who, without any farther persuasion from the others, began her fable in the following words.

THE THIRD FABLE.

Don Pomporio, a monk, is charged before his abbot with excessive gluttony, and saves himself from punishment by telling a fable which hits somewhat sharply the weaknesses of the abbot himself.



WOULD fain have been left free this evening and absolved from the burden of telling a fable, because in truth I find I cannot recall to memory a single one which will be likely to please you. But, in order to avoid any interruption of the rule which we have followed heretofore, I will do my best and relate one which, though you will hardly gather much

pleasure therefrom, may nevertheless be worth listening to.

In times now long past there lived in a famous monastery a certain monk, a man of mature age, of some mark, and a huge eater; indeed, he was wont to boast that it would be a light task for him to eat at a single meal a well-fattened quarter of veal and a pair of capons to boot. This good monk, who was called by name Don Pomporio, had a platter which he jestingly termed his oratory of devotion, and this platter was big enough in size to hold seven good ladlesful of soup. And over and above his due allowance of food, he made it his habit every day, both at dinner and at supper as well, to empty this platter, filled with broth or soup of one kind or another, without letting a single drop go to waste. Besides this, all the leavings which remained as overplus on the plates of the other monks, whether they were many or few, were gathered up as gifts to the oratory and put to the uses of

devotion. And however foul and dirty they might be, it mattered nought to him, forasmuch as no scraps of any sort came amiss for the purpose of his oratory, and he devoured them as greedily as if he had been a famished wolf. The other brethren of the monastery, when they remarked the unbridled gluttony of this man and his inordinate rapacity, were mightily astonished at the baseness of his nature, and would often essay to remonstrate with him, now with kindly and now with sharp-tongued speeches, over his detestable courses. But the more the brethren busied themselves in trying to bring him into a better mind, the more there grew within him the lust to add to the heap of scraps for his oratory, and he took no heed whatever of any words of counsel or reproach. I must not neglect to say that this swinish monk had one solitary virtue, that is to say, he never lost his temper, and his fellows might hurl at him what hard words they liked without rousing in him any spite or animosity.

But one day it came to pass that they carried an accusation against him before the father abbot, who, as soon as he heard what the charge against him was, caused him to be summoned into his presence and thus addressed him: 'Don Pomporio, there has been laid before me the testimony of your brethren as to your behaviour, and this, besides being in itself a crying shame to you, begets great scandal in the monastery.' To this speech Don Pomporio made reply: 'Tell me then what is the charge that my accusers make against me. I am in sooth the meekest and the most peacefully-minded monk now abiding in your monastery. I never interfere with anyone or cause any disturbance whatever, preferring to pass my days in tranquillity and quiet, and if perchance I should suffer aught of injury at the hands of another, I bear my trouble patiently, and give no cause of offence therefor.' Then said the abbot: 'But does this seem to you to be a

seemly and praiseworthy thing? You have a certain trencher which you use, not like a decent monk, but rather like a dirty, stinking pig. Into this you gather, over and above your own allowance of food, all the fragments which your brethren leave as superabundant, and this mess you devour without consideration and without shame, not as if you were a human creature, or a man vowed to religion, but rather as if you were some famished wild beast. Cannot you see, gross beast and good-for-nothing as you are, that all the others in the monastery look upon you as a buffoon?' Don Pomporio answered: 'And for what reason, good father abbot, ought I to be ashamed? Where in all the world shall be found any shame nowadays, and who has fear or respect for the same? If indeed you will give me leave and licence to speak freely, and without fear of consequences, I will answer you; but if you refuse this boon, I will simply yield you my obedience and

keep silence.' Then said the abbot, 'Say anything you like, for I am content to listen to you.' Don Pomporio, assured by these words, then spake as follows: 'Father abbot, we in sooth are in the condition of men who carry decsers upon their backs, that is to say, we can see what lies upon our neighbour's shoulders, but not what lies upon our own. I, if I had the chance of filling my belly with rich and delicate food after the fashion of those who sit in high places, would assuredly eat vastly less of the stuff which I now swallow; but, seeing that I eat rough simple food which is very easily digested, it seems to me in no wise a shameful thing to eat a good quantity of it.' The abbot, who was wont, together with the prior and with certain others of his friends, to feast sumptuously off choice capons and pheasants and godwits, took good heed of the words which the monk had spoken, and, fearing lest he should publish abroad what he evidently knew

about the table kept by his superior, excused him forthwith, enjoining him at the same time to feed in the manner which pleased him best, and telling him that it would be his own loss if he should not discover the art of good eating and drinking.

Thereupon Don Pomporio went out of the abbot's presence carrying his pardon with him, and henceforth from day to day redoubled his allowance, heaping up his sacred oratory of devotion with more and more good things. The other monks still went on with their reproaches against him on account of his bestial greed; so one day, by reason of their censures, he mounted the pulpit of the refectory and wittily related to them the following fable: 'In times now long past it chanced one day that Wind and Water and Shame foregathered in the same hostelry. Then, as they sat at meat together and talked, now of this thing and now of that, Shame spake in these words to Wind and Water: "When, O brother

and sister! have we ever before met together so peacefully as we are at this present moment?" To this Water made answer: "Of a truth Shame speaks with reason, and forsooth God above only knows when again will be found another opportunity for our meeting; but in case I should desire at any time to find you, O brother, tell me whereabouts your dwelling lies." The Wind said: "My sister, if you should wish ever to come to me, and to take your pleasure in my company, you need only search in the midst of every open place of outgoing, and in every narrow street, and you will quickly find me, for in such places as these I make my home. And you, Water, where do you live?" "I abide," said Water, "in the lowest lying marshes, and amongst the watercourses, and however dry and parched the earth may be you will always find me there. And now tell me, Shame, where is your home?" "Of a truth," said Shame, "I cannot tell; forasmuch as I am a

wretched creature and rejected by all. If you look amongst the great ones of the earth, and seek me, you will assuredly never find me there, because they never desire to behold me, and make their jests upon me. If you search for me amongst the people of low estate, you will see that they are so debased that they care little for me. If you go in quest of me amongst women, whether they be matrons, widows, or maids, you will find your labour equally vain, seeing that all of these flee from me as from a monstrous thing. If you would see me amongst monks, or priests, or nuns, I shall be found nowhere near them, for it is their wont to drive me away with sticks and scars; and so it comes to pass that up to this hour I have not been able to light upon any dwelling-place where I can abide continually. Wherefore, unless I may be suffered to bestow myself with you, I shall be as one deprived of every hope." Wind and Water, when they listened to this speech,

were strongly moved to compassion, and let Shame live in their company. But before many days had passed there arose a great tempest, and the wretched creature, vexed both by the wind and the water, and not finding any place of rest, was sunk and overwhelmed in the sea. From this time forth I have sought to find her in divers places, and I am still seeking her, but I have met with no trace of her, neither have I heard tidings of her from any man I have encountered. And for the reason that I have not been able to find her, I trouble myself little or nothing on her account ; so I will live the life which seems good to me, and you can do the same, forasmuch as in this our day such a thing as Shame is not to be found in all the world.'

Although Diana in her opening words had led the company to expect little merit in her story, it won nevertheless the favourable notice of the company. But the damsel, who was free from ambition and little disposed to care for

praise of any sort, at once set forth her enigma in these terms :


A goddess great, and fair, and strong,
Bears rule amidst the mortal throng ;
No stranger sway than hers is given
To any power of hell or heaven.
Man hails her yoke with keen delight,
Unmindful of the fatal blight
She sheds on body and on mind,
On play of wit, on impulse kind,
On every grace from virtue sprung,
On every fruit of brain or tongue.
Wretched the pilgrim to her shrine ;
She strikes him with her touch malign,
Dries up his blood till, fell and cold,
Death comes and has him safe in hold.

The meaning of this enigma was divined, if not by all, by the greater part of the listeners. They declared this fair strange lady to be nothing else than gluttony, which weakens the bodies of all those who eat too much, and uproots every sort of virtue, and also is the cause and source of death itself, seeing that the tale of those who die on account of glut-

tony is vastly greater than that of those who fall by the sword. Isabella, who was sitting by Diana's side, remarked that they had now brought to a fitting end the discussion concerning the enigma, so she at once began to tell her fable in the following words.

THE FOURTH FABLE.

A buffoon by means of a pleasantry tricks a certain gentleman, and is cast into prison therefor, from whence on account of another jest, he is liberated.

 HERE is a saying which is with good reason held in wide esteem, that, though the antics of a jester may now and then divert us, it follows not that we must always take pleasure therein. On this account, seeing that I have been chosen to take the fourth place in the story-telling of the present evening, there has come into my mind the recollection of a fable which tells how a certain buffoon played

a knavish trick upon a gentleman, who contrived to avenge himself and get full satisfaction, but in spite of this the fellow put yet another jest upon him, in such wise that he himself was thereby liberated from the prison into which he had been thrown.

Vicenza, as is well known to all of you, is a noble, rich, and splendid city, and the dwelling-place of many men of brilliant parts. Once upon a time there lived in this city Signor Hector, a member of the ancient and noble family of the Dreseni, who far surpassed all others of his age in the elegance of his discourse and the loftiness of his mind, thus giving and leaving behind him a noble name to those who might come after him. In sooth, so great were the gifts of mind and body enjoyed by this noble gentleman, that he well deserved to have had his effigy carved as a marvel of art and workmanship, and set up in the public ways and the piazzas and churches and theatres of the city, and to have had his

name exalted with the most enthusiastic praise as high as the stars of heaven. So great indeed was his beneficence, that it appeared as if no quality at all worthy of remembrance was wanting in him. His patience in listening was inexhaustible; equally weighty were the answers he gave to any who might inquire of him. His fortitude in adversity, the splendour of his deeds, the justice and mercy of his decisions—in short, the whole range of his conduct allowed it to be said that the great-souled Signor Hector took the foremost place amongst the members of the family of the Dreseni.

It happened one day that a certain gentleman sent to this illustrious nobleman a quarter of very choice veal. The servant who carried the meat, as soon as he came to the palace of the Signor Hector, chanced to meet there a sharp-sighted thief, and this latter, as soon as his eye fell upon the lackey with the quarter of veal, hastily went up to him and inquired of him who might have

sent the meat he was carrying. Then, after having learnt from the servant who it was, the knave charged him to wait there awhile until he should have told the signor of the gift. Whereupon, having gone into the house, he began (after the manner of buffoons) to juggle somewhat and play the zany, tarrying some time in order to befool both the servant without and the master within, but letting fall no word concerning the present which had been sent. Then he went back to the door, and, in the name of the master of the house, he returned due thanks to the sender of the veal, in terms which were entirely well fitted for the occasion, ordering the servant at the same time to follow him, inasmuch as the Signor Hector desired to pass on the present to a certain friend of his. In this fashion he cleverly led the servant away to his own house, where he found his brother, to whom he handed over the veal with the intention of having it cooked for his own eating. This done, they went their sev-

eral ways, and the servant, when he returned home, gave to his master the thanks which had been tendered to him in the name of Signor Hector.

One day, not long after this, the gentleman who had sent the quarter of veal met Signor Hector and put a question to him (as is the custom of some to do) whether he had found the veal good and well fattened. Whereupon Signor Hector, knowing nought of the matter concerning which the gentleman spoke, demanded of him what veal he might be talking of, affirming that he himself had received no quarter of veal or third part either. Then the donor who had sent it called his servant and inquired of him concerning the person to whom he had given the meat. The servant forthwith gave full description of the man, saying, 'The man who took the veal from me in the name of his master was a fellow fat in his body, with a merry eye and a big paunch, and with a mumbling trick of speech. He bade me take the veal

to the house of another gentleman.' Signor Hector, by means of this description, immediately perceived in his mind who the rogue must be, for the reason that the fellow in question was wont often to play such tricks. Thus, when he had summoned the knave before him, he found that the matter stood exactly as he had suspected, and after having taken to task the culprit, he sent him quickly to prison, and commanded them to clap his legs in fetters, indignant that such a disgrace and shame should have been put upon him by a juggler who had thus rashly ventured to deceive him.

But, as it came to pass, the rascally hanger-on was not fated to undergo a whole day's incarceration, because in the palace of the judicature, where the buffoon was examined, there was by a curious accident a certain officer called by name Vitello.¹ This man the prisoner begged to come to him, and, either to heap up one offence upon another, or to

¹ Veal, a calf.

discover some way out of his misfortune, wrote a letter to Signor Hector in these terms, and gave the same to the officer to deliver: 'Gracious signor, trusting in the generosity of your lordship I accepted the quarter of veal which was sent to you as a gift, and now in return for your kindness I send you, as a recompense for your quarter, a whole calf, and thus recommend myself to your favour.' Then he despatched the letter by the hand of the officer, who promised to see it safely delivered in his name. The officer went without tarrying to Signor Hector, and handed over to him the letter, which he read forthwith, and then gave command to his servants that they should lay hold of the calf which the buffoon had sent him as a present and slaughter it. The officer, as soon as he heard the order given to the servants that they should take him and butcher him, quickly unsheathed the sword which he carried by his side, and, brandishing it naked in his hand and

winding his cloak round his left arm, began to cry out in a loud voice, 'It is written indeed that in the dwellings of the great wickedness rules supreme, but you shall never make veal of this calf except you first kill and dismember him. Stand back, you knaves, if you do not wish to be dead men all of you.' All those who were standing round were astonished at this strange speech and behaviour, but nevertheless they felt themselves constrained to break out into laughter. And on account of this jest the buffoon was set at liberty, showing thus that it was not without reason that the famous philosopher Diogenes declared how men should seek to avoid the envy of friends even more studiously than the snares of foes; forasmuch as the latter are evils plain to be seen, while the former, being secret and hidden, are far more potent for harm, because our fears are never aroused into watchfulness by their presence.

Isabella here brought her brief fable

to an end, and won no small praise therefor from the honourable company. Then, to complete her task, she set to work and gave an enigma for solution in the following words :

Twofold are we in our name,
But single-natured all the same ;
Made with skill and art amain,
And perfected with bitter pain.
Fair dames our service meanly prize,
And poor folk like us large in size.
To countless men we lend our aid,
And never our hard fate upbraid ;
But when our useful task is done,
No thanks we get from anyone.

“ This enigma,” she said, “ means no other thing than the scissors with which ladies are wont to cut thread ; but amongst the poorer sort of people, such as tailors, shearers, barbers, and smiths, they are found of a size much greater than that of those used by ladies.” Isabella’s pretty riddle pleased greatly the listeners, who praised it loudly. Then Vicenza, who had been chosen to fill the

last place of this present night, began to relate her fable in these words.

THE FIFTH FABLE.

Frate Bigoccio becomes enamoured of Gliceria, and, having put on lay attire, fraudulently takes her to wife; then, having gotten her with child, forsakes her, and returns to his monastery; whereupon the superior, hearing of this deed, causes her to be honourably married.

DEAR ladies, I have heard it said many a time and often, that virtue is surely fated to come to ruin through persistence in deceitful courses — a saying which may well be illustrated by what happened to a certain monk, who was held by all to be a man of piety and wisdom. This same man, having been seized with love for a young damsel, whom he ultimately took to wife, was found out in his transgression, and forced to do severe penance therefor, while the damsel herself was honourably bestowed

in marriage. All this you will be able to understand from the story I am going to tell.

In Rome there once lived a certain Frate Bigoccio, born of high and noble family. He was a very young man, and one furnished with many graces of person and gifts of fortune. But it chanced that the unfortunate youth became so hotly inflamed with love for a damsel of exceeding beauty that he came perilously near to make an end of his life by reason of his amorous passion. He could get no rest either by day or by night; he grew ghastly and lean in seeming; neither physicians nor drugs worked him any benefit; he took pleasure in nothing; neither the hopes of youth nor the prospect of the abundant wealth he might hope to inherit yielded him any solace. On this account (and for the reason that he let his thoughts ever run on in this same mood, now conjuring up one fantastic remedy for his ills and now another) he resolved at last to write and

address to the superior of his monastery certain forged letters, demanding for himself leave to quit the place. Having thus made up his mind, he set to work to concoct the letters as aforesaid, making believe by means of the fraudulent words therein that they came from the hand of his father, who was very sick and infirm. He wrote in these terms : ‘ Reverend father, forasmuch as it is the pleasure of God, the supreme and all-powerful, to put an end to my life, and seeing that death, who is now very near to me, will not long delay to fetch me away, I have determined before I shall take leave of this world to make my last will and testament, and to appoint as my heir my only son, who has taken vows in the monastery of your reverence. And because there is left to me in my old age no other son but this one alone, whom I desire most earnestly to see once more, and to embrace and to kiss and to bless before I die, I beg you that of your kindness you will let him come

to me with all speed; otherwise, be your reverence well assured that, dying in despair, I shall go straightway to the realms of Tartarus.'

The letter having been duly presented to the superior of the monastery, and the leave to depart therein prayed for obtained, the aforesaid Bigoccio took his way to Florence, where his father dwelt, and, after he had received from his father a good store of gems and money, he purchased therewith many costly garments and horses and all other effects necessary for the maintenance of a household. Then he departed for Rome,¹ where he hired for himself a house close beside that of his lady-love, attiring himself every day in some fresh suit of silken clothes of varied fashion. In the course of a few days he contrived to become intimate with the father of the beloved damsel, and bade him to come several times as a guest to his house, presenting to

¹ Straparola writes "à Napoli," but this is manifestly a mistake.

him as a gift now this thing and now that. After some long time had passed in this wise, Bigoccio found a fitting and opportune season for the forwarding of his design; for one day, when the two were talking together after they had dined concerning divers matters, and especially of their business affairs (as is the common practice of men at such times), the love-stricken youth, in the course of conversation, told his companion how he was strongly inclined to take a wife. Furthermore, he said that, having ascertained his guest to be the father of a daughter exceedingly fair and graceful, and dowered with every virtue under the sun, it would give him the supremest pleasure were he to win this fair damsel to wife, and be firmly united to her by the necessary bond. He declared at the same time that he was desirous of this union solely on account of the many and excellent reports which had been brought to him concerning the lady.

The father of the damsel, who was a

man of somewhat low condition, made answer that his daughter was not of the same rank, or of like condition of life to Bigoccio; moreover, that he must bear in mind, in celebrating nuptials with her, how she was poor and he rich, she of plebeian, he of noble birth. Seeing, however, that he was so ardently set on having the damsel about his house, the father agreed to give her to him, not to fill a wife's place so much as a servant's. Then said the young man, 'Of a surety it would not be seemly that so dainty a maid should come to me in the office of a servant, because, by reason of her many excellent gifts, she is well worthy of a man of far nobler lineage than mine. However, if it should be your pleasure to give her to me, not for a handmaid, but for my beloved wife, I will take her gladly, and I will ever accord to her that real fellowship which is the due and lawful estate of a true matron.' In the end the two companions came to an agreement, and the nuptials were celebrated;

so that Frate Bigoccio got to wife the young maiden he desired.

When the night was come the husband and wife went duly to bed, and after a little, in the course of their mutual endearments, Frate Bigoccio perceived that Gliceria his wife had put gloves upon her hands ; therefore he said to her, 'Gliceria, take off the gloves from your hands and put them aside ; forasmuch as it is not seemly that you should be thus gloved while we are abed together.' To this Gliceria answered : 'Oh ! my good husband, I could never bring myself to touch a man at such times as these with my naked fingers.' Frate Bigoccio, when he heard these words of his wife, said nothing, but occupied himself as a bridegroom should. The next evening, when the pair were making ready for bed, Frate Bigoccio took secretly some hawk's jesses, with a lot of little bells affixed thereto, and having tied these around his middle, he got into bed thus accoutred, without letting

his wife perceive what he had done, and began at once to caress and embrace and kiss her, she being gloved as on the preceding night. Now because she had by this time acquired a taste for the delights of married love, she made sign to her husband that she was at his disposal, and forthwith, to her great amazement, became aware of the presence of the hawk's jesses. Whereupon she cried out, 'Oh! my husband, what thing is this? Surely it was not here last night.' To this Frate Bigoccio replied, 'What you feel are hawk's jesses, such as men use when they go a-fowling.' Then turning towards his wife he made as if he would embrace her, but poor Gliceria found that the pleasure she longed for was not to be hers. After a little she cried out, 'Ah! husband, these hawk's jesses are not at all to my taste.' Frate Bigoccio answered, 'If you find hawk's jesses displeasing to you, I can tell you that the gloves you wear are just as much an offence to me.' And so it happened that

from this moment the pair agreed by mutual consent to cast aside both gloves and jesses, and henceforth they took much pleasure one with another, so that in course of time Gliceria became with child.

For the space of a year they lived together as husband and wife, and, when the time of Gliceria's delivery was drawing nigh, Frate Bigoccio laid hands secretly on all the best and richest things in the house and took to flight, taking these chattels with him and leaving his wife pregnant. Then, after he had put on his former habit, he went back to the monastery he had quitted; and his wife, having been brought to bed of a son, waited for a long time in vain the return of her husband.

It happened that Gliceria was in the habit of going now and then to the chapel of the before-named monastery to hear mass, and one day, by chance—or rather by the will of God, who governs all things—she discovered that the Frate

who did the office was no other than her husband, and recognized him forthwith. Whereupon, with all the speed she knew how to use, she went to find the superior of the monastery, and told him, with the greatest care and circumspection, all the adventures which had befallen her, as are written above. The superior, when he had been informed of all the facts, and had satisfied himself of the truth of them, at once issued a process against Frate Bigoccio, and, after he had signed it, sent it on to the general of the congregation, who thereupon bade them lay hold of the Frate and make him do such a penance as he should remember for the rest of his days. Then from the moneys of the monastery they gave Gliceria a dowry and caused her to be secretly married to another, and, having taken possession of the child, they had it brought up at their own charges.

Here the gracious Vicenza brought to an end her fable, which all the listeners without exception praised heartily, and

found much to divert them therein, especially when they were told how the lady with her gloved hands discovered the jesses with the little bells attached thereto. And because the hour was already late, the Signora directed Vicenza to let her enigma be given forthwith, and she, waiting for no farther order, set it before the company in the following terms :

From everyone I something take,
But on myself no claim I make.
Mark well my nature. If you gaze
Into my face I mock your ways :
For if you sorrow, I am sad ;
But if you smile, you make me glad.
Because I tell truth from a lie,
Men call me wicked, false, and sly ;
Strange saying this, but true I ween.
So I, to let it clear be seen
That truth nor honesty I lack,
Will never tell you white is black.

Not a single one of all the company had wit enough to say what Vicenza's enigma was designed to mean, seeing that the true sense thereof was so carefully hidden under the rind. But Vicenza,

like a sensible maiden, gave the solution in the following terms, in order that it might not be left unguessed: "The meaning of my enigma," she said, "is the mirror into which men, and ladies as well, are wont to gaze. This same thing catches the likeness of everyone who looks into it, but not its own. It does not show you one thing for another, but shows you to be that which you are in truth."

The enigma was indeed ingenious, and quite as ingenious was the solution. But, for the reason that the whitening dawn was now beginning to appear, the Signora gave leave to everyone to go home to rest, with the understanding, however, that they should all return well equipped on the following evening, forasmuch as it was her wish that every one of the company should tell a short fable, completed as hitherto by an enigma. And to this they all gave their assent.

The End of the Eleventh Night.

Night the Twelfth.





Night the Twelfth.

THE blithe and watchful birds had now some time agone fled before the approaching shadows of night, and the bats, enemies of the sun and sacred to Proserpine, had come forth from their wonted dwellings in the caves of the rocks and were briskly wheeling their flight through the dusky air, when the honourable and courteous company of ladies and gentlemen, laying aside every troublesome and hurtful thought, took their way in merry wise to the accustomed place of meeting. When they had all seated themselves according to their due rank the Signora came forward to meet them, and gave to each one a gracious salute. Then, after they had danced several measures, exchanging am-

orous talk the while, the Signora (since this was her pleasure) gave command that the vase of gold should be brought forth. Having put her hand therein, she drew out the names of five of the damsels. The first of these was that of Lionora, the second that of Lodovica, the third that of Fiordiana, the fourth that of Vicenza, and the fifth that of Isabella. To these five, and to all the others as well, was granted licence to discourse with full liberty on any theme which might best accord with their humour, on the one condition alone that the fables they might tell should be shorter and more succinct than those of the preceding night. To this they, all together, and each one on her own behalf, agreed readily. Then, having made choice of the damsels whose duty it should be to relate the fables on this, the twelfth night, the Signora gave a sign to the Trevisan and to Molino that they should sing a canzonet, and these two, promptly obedient to her command,

took up their instruments, and having tuned them, sang with graceful art the following song.

SONG.

Since Time makes youth and grace and beauty vain,
And faster flies with every day,
Why tarry still my sorrow to allay?
For life and time together fade and fly,
And all our hopes are false and unavailing;
Vast our desire, but soon our days are fled.
Wherefore in deep despair I lie.
Too late! ah, cruel lot of mortals failing!
Remorse will come; then you will mourn me dead,
And blame your cruel words which worked my bane
Then pity now my amorous pain,
While yet your beauty shines, and I of love am fain.

The delightful song, sung so harmoniously by the Trevisan and Molino, pleased mightily the whole company, and everyone gave it praise loud and high. Then, as soon as the Signora perceived that all were silent, she directed Lionora, who had been chosen by lot to relate the first fable of the twelfth night, to begin

her story-telling forthwith. Whereupon the damsel without delay began in this wise.

THE FIRST FABLE.

Florio, jealous of his wife, is cleverly fooled by her, and is thereby so well cured of his malady, that hereafter they live happily together.

AGAIN and again have I heard it said, dear ladies, that the cleverest stratagems of art and science are helpless when they are pitted against the tricks of a woman, and the reason of this is that woman sprang at her creation, not from the dry barren earth, but from the ribs of Adam our first father. Thus in the beginning they are made of flesh and not of dust, what though in the end their bodies, like men's, must come to ashes. Therefore, as it is my duty to begin our pleasant entertainment to-night, I have determined to tell you the story of a jealous husband, who, though he was always

held to be one well dowered with knowledge and good sense, was nevertheless duped by his wife, and by this discipline quickly changed from a fool into a wise man.

In Ravenna, an ancient town of Romagna, the dwelling-place of many notable men, and especially of those skilled in medicine, there lived formerly a worthy physician of rich and noble family named Florio. He, being a sprightly youth and well looked upon by all — both on account of his gracious bearing and of his skill in his art—took to wife a very fair and graceful maiden by name Dorothea; but after the nuptials it fell out, by ill-hap, that her exceeding beauty kindled in his mind so great jealousy and fear lest someone should defile his marriage bed, that he caused to be stopped with brick and mortar every aperture of the house down to the smallest crack, and in addition to this he fixed over all the windows strong gratings of iron. He even went so far as to forbid

anyone, however closely related by blood or joined by affinity or by friendship, from entering his house. In short, the jealous wretch spent all his strength and study, and kept watch day and night to rid himself of every cause which could possibly sully the chastity of his wife or make her forgetful of her marriage vow. Now, under both the civil and the municipal law it is held that those who are incarcerated on account of their own debts, or of bail or surety given to their creditors, ought to be liberated and discharged after a certain season of duress; nay, even malefactors and delinquents come under the same rule; but, as far as this poor lady was concerned, it was never found possible for her, in her long-enduring affliction, to cross the threshold of the house or to break loose from her captivity, for the reason that her husband kept for the guarding of his house and for his own service varlets who were devoted to his interests. Nor was he in any less degree watchful over these guar-

dians themselves, except when he went in and out of the house for his own pleasure. He, however, like a far-seeing cautious man, never left his home without having first searched every nook and cranny of the house, and shut close all the issues thereof, and with the utmost diligence bolted the windows with bolts and locked them with keys made with the most marvellous cunning. Thus in this cruel affliction the lady passed every day of her life. Now this discreet and prudent wife (who was in sooth the very mirror of virtue and modesty, and might justly have been put on a level with the Roman Lucretia herself), being moved with pity for this sottish delusion of her husband, considered well in her mind how she might best work a cure of his grievous distemper. The plan she ultimately fixed upon could never have been brought to a successful issue if her own natural wit had not made plain to her what notable enterprises women may perform and

bring to pass. It happened that on a certain day she and her husband made an agreement to go together on the following morning, both of them clad in monkish garb, to confess themselves at a convent which stood outside the city. Having found out a method of opening one of the windows, she chanced to see, by looking through the bars of the iron grating, that there was passing by in the street a certain youth who had professed himself to be consumed by an ardent love of her. Wherefore, after she had cautiously called to him, she said, 'Tomorrow morning early you must go, clad in monkish habit, to the monastery which stands just outside the town. Then I pray you to wait for me until you shall see me coming, and my husband as well, both clad in the self-same fashion, when you must hasten in merry guise to come towards me and embrace me and kiss me, begging me at the same time to come and dine with you, and showing yourself overjoyed at meeting me in this

unexpected manner ; because, as I have already told you, I and my husband have agreed to go to-morrow both of us clad in the garb of religious persons to confess ourselves at the monastery aforesaid. So be wary and of good courage, and take care that you fail not to carry out these directions which I give you.'

As soon as she had spoken, the gallant youth went his way, and having put on monk's attire and laid in a good stock of all sorts of delicate viands and exquisite wine, repaired to the monastery the lady had spoken of, and made an agreement with the reverend fathers for the loan of one of the cells in which to sleep that night. When the morning had come, he caused to be got ready yet more dainty dishes for the feast over and above those which he had already prepared, and, this business being despatched, he began to walk up and down before the doors of the monastery. Before many minutes had passed he espied his lady Dorotea approaching, clad in the habit

worn by the brethren, whereupon he straightway ran to meet her with glad and joyful countenance, like to one altogether overcome by some unlooked-for and excessive happiness. Then, casting aside all fear, he cried, 'Ah! I leave you to think what a pleasure and delight it is to see you once again, dearly beloved brother Felix, forasmuch as so long a time has elapsed without our meeting.' And with discourse like this they embraced and kissed one another, bedewing one another's faces with imaginary tears; and, this done, he made both Dorotea and her husband his guests, and invited them to enter his cell. Then he bade them rest themselves at the table, which was superbly spread, not a single thing being wanting which the heart of man could desire. And he, having seated himself by the dame, kept pressing the choicest morsels upon her, and kissing her ardently between every mouthful. The poor jealous husband, utterly dumbfounded by





this strange freak, and with his belly fuller of rage than meat, knew not where to look, and forgot his eating and drinking in the heart-breaking vexation of seeing the rare and delicate beauty of his wife, which he had so carefully guarded for himself, thus polluted by the unlawful embraces and kissing of a lecherous monk.

With pastime such as this the day was spent, and when the dusk began to fall the husband of Dorotea, whose endurance was now almost at an end, thus addressed the young man: 'Brother, it nowise irks us to be in your company, and I take it that ours is not displeasing to you, judging from the caresses you lavish on my companion. But since nightfall is approaching, and since we have now been some hours absent from our convent, whither, as you know, we are bound to return for our lodging, we pray you to suffer us to take our leave.' To this speech the young man paid little heed, but the lady, marking a sign

which her husband made to her, requested on her part that they might be allowed to go their way, which grace they obtained with some difficulty, and only after Dorotea and the young man had hugged one another closely, and exchanged dozens of ardent kisses.

When the two novices in disguise had returned to their home, the husband straightway began to consider how he himself had been the cause of all the ill and torment he had lately suffered, and how, after all, it was ever lost labour on a man's part to strive against the deceits and subtle inventions of women. After a short review of his conduct, he recognized his past folly and pocketed his defeat, following up his recantation by opening all his windows, and knocking off all the bars and padlocks from the doors, so that in all the city there was not a house freer or more open than his. Thus, having abolished all restraints and granted to his wife full liberty to go whithersoever she would, he lived with

her in peace, being cured of the grave and serious malady which oppressed him. And Dorotea, freed from her cruel imprisonment, loyally kept faith with her husband.

When the graceful Lionora had brought to an end her diverting story, which commended itself fully to the taste of the company, the Signora gave the word for her to complete her task by setting forth her enigma, which without waiting for further direction she did in the following terms:

One day upon a bank of grass
I came across a pretty lass,
And something else I also viewed
Of aspect rough and coarse and rude.
Then took the maid a thing in hand,
For such a purpose duly planned,
And steadily to work she went,
To carry out her fixed intent.
She held, and would not let it go,
But worked it smartly to and fro,
Until it gave her, brisk and neat,
A pleasant savour for her meat.

Although nobody fathomed the meaning of this enigma, the men began to laugh, and the ladies blushed somewhat and hid their faces. When she saw this, Lionora at once gave the interpretation : "It is a pretty village girl seated on a bank of grass and holding between her knees a large mortar, and in her hands a pestle. This latter she works lustily, braying certain herbs, to extract therefrom their juices, which she uses to flavour her sauce."

The company received the solution of this difficult enigma with approbation, and when they had given over laughing, the Signora directed Lodovica to set forth her story, and she, to show her readiness, began at once in these terms.

THE SECOND FABLE.

A certain fool, after having enjoyed the labours of a fair and gentle lady, is rewarded by the husband of the same.



I HAD settled in my mind to relate to you a fable of a character differing somewhat from this I am about to tell, but the story we have just heard from this my sister here has induced me to change my purpose, and made me anxious to point out to you how it happens, not seldom, that one may reap advantage from the mere fact of being a fool, and to add, as a warning, that it is always an unwise thing to make fools the sharers of our secrets.

In Pisa, one of the noblest cities of Tuscany, there resided in these our times a certain lady exceedingly fair and graceful, but over her name I think it more decent and seemly to pass in silence.

This lady, who was joined in the bond of matrimony with a gentleman belonging to a house of high lineage, of great wealth, and wide-spreading influence, was hotly inflamed with amorous passion for a young man of the city, fully as well furnished with charms of manner and person as she herself, and this youth she was wont to receive in her own house every day about the hour of noon, when with the greatest ease of mind and confidence they would bring into play the weapons of Cupid, both of them taking the greatest pleasure and delight from this gentle converse.

It happened one day that a simple fellow, crying out at the top of his voice, ran past the house in pursuit of a dog which had stolen from him a piece of meat and was flying with the same in its mouth along the street. And a great crowd of people joined in the chase, hooting and crying and making a hideous hurlyburly thereanent; wherefore the dog, mindful of its own skin and bent

on saving its life, having found the door of the lady's house standing somewhat open, rushed into the entrance and hid itself. The fool, who had espied the dog as it was running into the door of the house, began to cry out in a loud voice as soon as he came up, knocking violently at the door and shouting, 'Drive out the thief who is hidden within here at once, and do not give shelter to ribald rascals who richly deserve the gallows.' It chanced that at this same time the lady had her paramour with her, and she, deeming that the great concourse of people she saw below could only have come thither in order to hale forth her lover, and thus to publish abroad the offence he had committed, was in great fear lest he should fall into the clutches of justice and suffer the penalty prescribed by law for adulterers; so she opened gently the door of the house and allowed the fool to enter thereby. Then, as soon as she had once more closed the house, she threw herself on her knees

before the simple fellow, and in the guise of a suppliant begged and entreated him that of his mercy he would keep silence, offering herself to him, just as she was, that he might take whatsoever pleasure of her he would, provided only that he should do nothing which might lead to the discovery of her lover. The fool (who forsooth showed himself to be shrewd enough in this matter) straightway put aside his former anger,¹ and began to embrace her tenderly and to kiss her, and in a very short space of time they fell to playing the game which Venus loves. Scarcely were they disengaged from their task when the husband of the lady came home unexpectedly, and, knocking at the door, called out aloud that someone should come and open to him.

Hereupon the lady, with noteworthy and commendable presence of mind — albeit she felt herself sorely stricken by this unlooked-for ill, and uncertain what

¹ Orig., *mandato il furor suo da banda.*

course she should adopt in such a calamity — took the young man her lover and carefully stowed him away under the bed, all bewildered with fear and half dead as he was, and next made the fool get up into the chimney and there hide himself. Then she opened the door straightway to her husband, and, after she had lavished upon him many amorous caresses, she adroitly begged him to come to bed with her and take his pleasure. And, seeing that it was now the season of winter, the husband gave order that a fire should be kindled forthwith, because he felt he had need of warmth. Whereupon the lady caused them to bring wood for the making of the same, and she took good care that this wood should not be dry and prompt to burn quickly, but wood of the greenest that could be gotten. But the pungent smoke rising from the burning of wood of this sort made the eyes of the fool in the chimney smart acutely, and he found himself suffocated thereby in such a manner that he could

hardly draw his breath, and, in spite of all his efforts to keep quiet, he could not help sneezing.

When the husband of the lady heard this noise he peered up the chimney and espied the fellow who was hidden there, and at once began to abuse and threaten him in good set terms, deeming him to be some lurking robber. But the simpleton cried out, and said: 'Aha, Signor! you have spied out me, but you have not spied out the gallant who is hidden under the bed there. I, in sooth, have once enjoyed your wife, and once only; but he has befouled your bed a thousand times.' When he heard these words of the fool, the husband became as it were beside himself with rage, and having looked under the bed, he found the lover there, and straightway slew him. Thereupon the fool, who had by this time come down from his hiding-place in the chimney, caught up a thick stick and began to cry out at the top of his voice, saying: 'You have slain this man,



More Knave Than Fool

Eight the Twelfth

Second Part

More Knave Than Fool

Right the Twelfth

SECOND FABLE





who was a debtor of mine. By God, if you do not pay me the sum he owes me, I will lay a charge against you before the judge, and accuse you of the death of this gallant here.'

The homicide stood for a time considering well these words spoken by the fool; but in the end, when he perceived that he had little chance of getting the better of the fellow, and that his own position was one of great peril, he closed his mouth with the gift of a bagful of money. And by this means the fool by reason of his folly gained something which wisdom might well have lost.

As soon as Lodovica had come to the end of her brief fable she took up the telling¹ of her enigma at once, and, without waiting for farther word of command from the Signora, spake thus:

Gentle dames, I go to find
What aye to me is blythe and kind,
And having found it, next I ween
I set it straight my knees between;

¹ Orig., *diede di piglio*.


And then I rouse the life that dwells
Within, and soon its virtue tells.
As to and fro my hand I sway,
Beneath my touch sweet ardours play —
Delights which might a savage move,
And make you faint through too much love.

The ladies, as they listened to this enigma, restrained themselves from laughing aloud as best they could; but, carried away by the sweetness and wit thereof, they were compelled to give it at least the approving tribute of a smile. Certain of them indeed were disposed to censure the fair damsel who told it, and to speak injuriously of her modesty in unhandsome terms; whereupon she, sensible of the wounds which were being dealt to her honour, spake thus: "Those who are full within of lewdness and malignity can only put forth what is unclean and evil, and those of you who are in such case have judged my words to mean something entirely foreign to my own conception of them; for this enigma of mine is simply intended to describe the

viol da gamba, which instrument a lady, when she desires to play upon the same and to give delight to her friends around, places between her knees, and then, having taken in her right hand the bow, she moves this to and fro in order that she may draw forth from her instrument those sweet sounds which in sooth often make us faint and sick with love." Having heard this solution of Lodovica's subtle enigma, all the listeners were fully satisfied and content therewith and praised it highly; but, in order that no more time should be lost, the Signora gave the word to Fiordiana that she should forthwith begin to tell to them some pleasant love-story, exhorting her at the same time that she should follow the example of the others in the matter of brevity. Then Fiordiana, without letting her voice be muffled by her teeth, spake as follows.

THE THIRD FABLE

Federigo da Pozzuolo, a man learned in the language of animals, is earnestly pressed by his wife to tell her a certain secret, but in lieu of this he beats her in strange fashion.

T is the duty of all wise and prudent men to hold their wives in due fear and subjection, and on no account to be induced by them to wear their breeches as head gear. If indeed they should be led to follow other courses than these they will of a surety have good cause to repent in the end.

It happened one day that Federigo da Pozzuolo, a young man of great parts and prudence, was riding towards Naples on a mare of his which was in foal, carrying behind him on the crupper his wife, who was also pregnant. Likewise there was a young colt which followed the mare its mother, and, having been left

some distance behind on the road, it began to neigh, and to cry out in its own language, 'Mother, mother, go slowly, I pray you ; because I, being very young and tender, and only just a year old, am not able in my pace to follow in your footsteps.' Hearing this the mare pricked up her ears, and, sniffing the air with her nostrils, began also to neigh loudly, and said in answer to her colt, 'I have to carry my mistress, who is with child, and in addition to this I bear a young brother of yours in my womb ; while you, who are young and brisk, carry no burden of any sort strapped on your back, and yet you declare that you cannot travel. Come on, if you wish to come ; but if not, go and do whatever pleases you.'

The young man, when he understood the meaning of these words (for be it known he was well skilled in the utterances of birds and of all the animals that live on earth), smiled somewhat ; whereupon his wife, who was greatly filled with

wonder thereanent, questioned him as to the reason why he smiled. To this her husband made answer that he had laughed spontaneously ; but that, if in any event he should be led to tell her the cause of his laughter, she might take it for certain that the Fates would without more ado cut the thread of his life, and that he would die on the spot. But the importunate woman was not satisfied with this, and replied that she wanted, at all hazard, to know the reason why he had thus laughed ; adding that if he would not tell her she would lay hold of him by the weazand. Then the husband, finding himself thus placed in a position of difficulty and danger, answered her, speaking thus : ‘ When we shall have returned to Pozzuolo you shall set in order all my affairs, and make all the necessary provisions both for my body and my soul after death. Then I will make known to you all you want to learn.’

As soon as her husband had given her

this promise the wicked and malicious woman was silent, and when they were returned to Pozzuolo she quickly recalled to mind the promise which had been made to her, and forthwith besought her husband to be as good as his word. Whereupon Federigo replied by charging her to go at once and fetch the priest, forasmuch as, seeing that he must needs die on account of this matter, he was anxious first to confess himself, and to recommend himself to his Maker. As soon as she should have done this, he would tell her all. Thereupon the wife, who was determined to see her husband lying dead rather than give up aught of her pestilent wishes, went forthwith to summon the confessor.

At this moment, while Federigo was lying in his bed, overcome with grief, he heard his dog address certain words to his cock, who was crowing aloud: 'Are you not ashamed of yourself, wretch and ribald that you are, to crow thus? Our good master is lying very near his last

breath, and you, who ought to be sorrowful and full of melancholy, keep on crowing as if you rejoiced thereat.'

To these words the cock promptly made answer: 'And supposing that our master should die, what have I to do with that? Am I, indeed, to be charged with causing his death? He wishes to die of his own accord. Do you not know what is written in the first book of the "Politics," "The wife and the servant stand on the same footing."'¹ Seeing, therefore, that the husband is the head of the wife, it is her bounden duty to regard the usages and customs of her husband as the laws of her life. I, forsooth, have a hundred wives, and, through the workings of fear, I make them all most obedient to my commandments, castigating now one and now another, and giving pecks wherever I may think they are deserved.

¹ "Amongst non-Greek peoples, on the other hand, females and slaves stand on one and the same footing." — ARISTOTLE, *Politics*, b. i., c. 2.

And this master of ours has only a single wife, yet he knows nought how to manage her, and to make her obedient to his commands. Let him die forthwith. Do you not believe that our mistress will soon find for herself another husband? So let it be with him, seeing that he is a man of such little account, and one disposed to give way to the foolish and unbridled will of his wife.'

The young man, when he had comprehended and well considered in his mind the words he had just listened to, at once altered his purpose, and felt deeply grateful to the cock for what he had said. The wife, after she had come back from seeking the priest, was still pertinacious to learn the cause of her husband's laughter; wherefore he, having seized her by the hair, began to beat her, and gave her so many and lusty blows that he nearly left her for dead.

This fable did not vastly please those of the listeners who were ladies, especially when they heard tell of the sound

basting which Federigo gave his wife. Nevertheless, they grieved amain when they heard how she would fain have been the cause of her husband's death. When all were at length silent, Fiordiana, so as not to disturb the order they had followed from the beginning, propounded her enigma in the following words :

Once on a time I had a view
Of what would have seemed strange to you.
A damsel, working at her trade,
Who now an opening roomy made,
Now shut it close ; then took with care
Something a span in length and fair ;
Its name I knew not. First within
The space she thrust its point so thin,
And then the whole ; and worked away
With merry eye and aspect gay ;
As you would say, were you to meet
One plying thus with hands and feet.

This enigma which Fiordiana set the company to guess gave plentiful occasion for jest and merriment, forasmuch as the greater part, if not all of the


listeners put a very immodest gloss upon it. But Fiordiana, who, on account of the laughter which went round, perceived that the company had judged evilly of her enigma, rose to her feet, and with a smiling face said; "Ladies and gentlemen, the sound of your merry laughter tells me plainly that you imagine the sense of the enigma I have just told to you to be indecent, or, I should say, flagrantly indecent. But, in sooth, if you will listen to me with attention, you will find there is nothing lewd about it, as you now seem to think; for indeed my enigma is meant to display a graceful damsel working at a loom. She works the treadles with her feet, and with her hands makes the shuttle fly from this side to that through the space between the threads, and pulls forward the frame of the loom in order that the weft may be closely woven."

All the company gave praise to this high flight of Fiordiana's wit, which they affirmed to be more excellent even

than they had anticipated from her, and thereupon they all together held merry discourse. But, in order that too much time should not be taken up in laughing, the Signora made a sign to Vicenza that she should take her turn in telling a story; when the damsel, with a merry smile, began in the following words.

THE FOURTH FABLE.

Concerning certain sons who were unwilling to carry out the testament of their father.

HE greatest folly men or women can commit is to indulge in the dream of doing some good or other after they shall have gone to another world, forasmuch as in this our day obedience to the behests of the dead is treated as a thing of little account, or, rather, of no account at all. This is a matter which I have tested again and again, seeing that, of all the money which has

been left to me, I have only been able to obtain possession of a very small portion. This, indeed, has come to pass through the fault of the executors, who, in their desire to make more wealthy the rich, have only succeeded in impoverishing the poor—a contention you will be able to understand clearly from the arguments I mean to set before you.

I must tell you that in Pesaro, a town of the Romagna, there once resided a certain citizen, a man held in high repute, and very wealthy, but at the same time loth to part with his money. This man, deeming that he had come to the end of his days, made his last will and testament; by which instrument, after appointing his sons (of whom he had many) the general heirs of his estate, laid upon them the burden of first paying out of his wealth a very large number of legacies and gifts in trust. After the testator was dead and buried, and duly mourned according

to the custom of the country, the sons assembled themselves together and took counsel as to what course they should follow in the course of the legacies which their father had bequeathed for the good of his soul. These they found to be very great and excessive, forasmuch as that, if they should set themselves to carry out the will in its entirety, these bequests would assuredly swallow up the entire estate. In such case this property of theirs would prove to be for them an absolute loss, rather than a benefit of any sort or kind.

When, therefore, they had fully debated the business, the youngest of the brothers rose in the meeting and spake the following words: 'You must know, my brethren, that there is one thing which (if such form of speech be permitted) is even truer than truth itself; and by this I mean, that if the soul of our father is engulfed in the abyss of hell, and condemned to remain there, it will be altogether vain and unprofitable

for us to pay the legacies he has left for the repose of his soul, seeing that there is no redemption found for a spirit in hell, and that for those who enter therein there is no hope of ever coming forth again. And if he should now be in the flowery fields of Elysium, where reigns perpetual and eternal repose, he stands assuredly in no need either of legacies or of bequests in trust. Again, if he should have been sent to purgatory, there to be cleansed of his sins for a certain season, it is plain and clear to all, that when the purifying fires shall have done their work, his offences will disappear, and he will be entirely freed therefrom; and again, in this case, legacies will profit him nought. For these reasons, therefore, I would advise that—leaving the soul of our father to be cared for by divine providence—we should forthwith divide our father's estate, and enjoy the same as long as we shall live, in like manner as he enjoyed it during his lifetime, in order that the

dead may not profit more thereby than the living."

I say once more, at the conclusion of this brief fable of mine, that it behoves us to do our good works while we live, and not after we are dead, forasmuch as in these days (as I have already remarked at the beginning of my fable) men keep little or no faith with the dead. The subtle reasoning of the younger brother's speech won the approval of all the company, save only Vicenza herself, to whom the case applied. But so as not to stand before the assembly as one grief-stricken, she ended her fable by setting for the others to guess an amusing and sprightly enigma, which was as follows:

I come with gladsome voice and face,
And close by you myself I place ;
Then leaning over you I bend,
And something deftly down I send,
Until it touch the fountain bright,
In which I take such dear delight.
And as I deep and deeper sound,
The keenest, sweetest joy is found.

But, strange ! I come all brisk and gay,
And silent, weeping, go away.

“This enigma of mine is intended to describe the maid-servant who early in the morning and again in the evening is wont to repair to the well to draw water. While she goes thither the buckets make a noise, and as soon as she arrives near the well she leans over it, and having taken the rope in her hand, she lets it down into the well with the bucket attached thereto, and rejoices in her task. The deeper down she sends the bucket in order to reach the cool fresh water, the more she is heated in drawing it up again. Moreover, she puts the bucket into the well dry and clattering, and draws it forth silent and dripping.”

The company judged this enigma to be a very pretty pleasant jest, and laughed long and loud over the same. And now that it was finished, Isabella at once began to tell her fable in the following words.

THE FIFTH FABLE.

Sixtus, the Supreme Pontiff,¹ by a single speech enriches a servant of his named Gierolamo.

THE tales hitherto told by these our sisters have been so charming and witty, that I fear greatly lest I may fail to please you on account of the meanness of my skill when compared with theirs. However, I will not on this account hold aloof from the pleasant custom we have here adopted, and although it happens that the fable which I am about to relate to you has been already told by Messer Giovanni Boccaccio in his 'Decameron,'² still he has not there set it forth exactly

¹ Francesco della Rovere. He was born at Celle, a village near Savona, in 1414, became general of the Franciscan order, and was elected Pope, as Sixtus IV., on the death of Paul II., in 1471. He died in 1484.

² "Decameron," x., I. Told by Boccaccio of Alfonso, King of Spain, and Ruggieri di Figiovanni. Straparola has added the concluding incident.

after the manner in which I propose to treat it, seeing that I have added thereto somewhat which may serve to make it more acceptable to your taste.

Pope Sixtus IV., a man of Genoese extraction, was born at Savona, a city on the seacoast. Before becoming Pope he was known by the name of Francesco da Rovere, and in his youthful days he was sent to school at Naples, where amongst his mates was a certain boy, a citizen and compatriot of his own, called Gierolomo da Riario.¹ To this young Da Rovere Gierolomo was faithfully devoted, serving him continually both while he was a schoolboy and afterwards when he became a monk and a prelate. And when he was elevated to high episcopal office, this same man still continued instant in his service, and grew old in the faithful discharge of his duties. When

¹ According to Bayle there were other versions current as to the relations between Della Rovere and Riario. Some held the latter to be the Pope's nephew, some his son; while others hinted at a more sinister connection.

Sixtus had been elevated to the highest pontifical dignity through the sudden death of Pope Paul, he followed the ordinary custom and called over in his mind the names of all his servants and attendants, bestowing upon them rewards which were munificent, and in some cases even beyond reason, with the exception of this same Gierolomo, who in return for his long years of faithful service, and for all his too great love and devotion, got no other recompense than forgetfulness and ingratitude. Which thing, I opine, must rather have happened to him through some malice of fortune than for any other reason. On this account the said Gierolomo, overcome with grief and disappointment, desired to ask leave of the Pope to quit the place and return to his own country; so, after he had gone down on his knees in the presence of His Holiness, the licence he desired was granted to him. So great indeed was the ingratitude of the Pope towards his old servant, that he refused to give

him either money, or horses, or varlets for the journey; and furthermore (which was the worst blow of all) he required Gierolomo to render a strict account of his stewardship — a thing which happened likewise to Scipio Africanus, who publicly displayed to the Roman people the wounds he had received in the service of the state, and found himself afterwards rewarded with exile as a guerdon for his great deeds.

It has been said with great truth of avarice that it works its greatest evil when it shows itself ungrateful. Gierolomo, after he had departed from Rome, went towards Naples, but as he journeyed not a single word fell from his lips until he came to a certain pond which lay by the roadside. As he was passing by this there came upon the horse he was riding the desire to stale; whereupon the beast eased nature then and there, thus adding water to water. And when Gierolomo marked this, he said: 'Of a truth I see that you are like the Pope my patron,

who, following no righteous rule in what he does, has let me go away to my home without recompense of any sort, only giving me his gracious leave and licence as the payment for my long labour in his service. Is there in sooth a more miserable thing in all the world than the man from whom benefits drop away and perish, and upon whom injuries of all sorts close round on every side?' The servant who was in Gierolomo's company stored up these words in his mind, reckoning that in patience the speaker of them surpassed Mutius, and Pompey, and Zeno. And journeying in this wise they came to Naples.

Then the servant, after he had taken leave of Gierolomo, returned to Rome, and related to the Pope word by word everything that had happened, and Sixtus, when he had well considered the words which had been told to him, bade the servant go back straightway to Naples with a letter commanding Gierolomo to return and present himself before the

Pope under pain of excommunication. Gierolomo, when he had read the Pope's letter, rejoiced greatly, and took his way back to Rome as quickly as he might. The Pope, after Gierolomo had duly kissed his feet, commanded him to present himself on the following day in the senate, at the hour of the council, after the trumpets had sounded. In the meantime the Pope had caused to be made two very beautiful vases of exactly the same size, and in one of these he placed a great number of pearls, rubies, sapphires, and other precious stones and jewels of very great value, while in the other there was nothing but pieces of metal, both vases when filled being exactly the same weight.

The next morning, when the priests, bishops, presidents, ambassadors and prelates had come into the senate house and the Pope had taken his seat upon his tribunal, he caused the two aforesaid vases to be brought into his presence, and then called Gierolomo before him

and addressed the assembly in the following words : ‘ My dear and well-beloved sons, this man whom you see before you has been faithful and obedient to my commands beyond all others who have ever served me, and I cannot praise him too highly for the manner in which he has borne himself since the first years of his service. Wherefore, in order that he may now obtain the due reward for his devotion, and no longer have occasion to complain of his fortune and of my ingratitude, I will give him the choice between these two vases, allowing him to be his own arbiter and to take and enjoy the one upon which his choice may fall.’

After listening to those words of the Pope, Gierolomo set himself to choose one or other of the vases, but the luckless and unhappy wight, after considering and reconsidering, fixing now upon one and now upon the other, ended (as bad luck would have it) by choosing the one which was filled with pieces of metal. When the other vase was uncovered and

Gierolomo saw the great treasure which it contained, how it was filled with emeralds, sapphires, diamonds, rubies, topazes, and other kinds of precious stones, he was overcome with amazement and was like to die of vexation. The Pope, when he observed how disappointed and grief-stricken the poor fellow looked, exhorted him straightway to confess himself, declaring that this thing must have happened to him as a punishment for certain sins which he had neglected to acknowledge. Then, after Gierolomo had duly confessed himself and received absolution, the Pope imposed upon him as a secret penance, that for a whole year he should come every day at a fixed time into the senate (into which place it was lawful for no man to enter unbidden), where the private affairs of kings and of states and of great nobles were debated, and then and there whisper an Ave Maria into the Pope's ear. Sixtus also gave command that every door at which Gierolomo might

present himself should straightway be opened to him, and that he should have continued free access to the papal presence with all the honour that it was possible to bestow.

Therefore, when the next day had come, Gierolomo, without saying a word to anyone, went into the Pope's presence, bearing himself in worshipful wise, but having at the same time a certain air of presumption about him. Having gone up beside the seat of Peter, he straightway did the penance which had been imposed upon him. As soon as he had finished whispering into the Pope's ear he turned and went out, whereupon all those who were present were mightily astonished at what they had seen, and the ambassadors wrote tidings to their sovereigns saying that Gierolomo was the real Pope, and that all questions coming before the senate were dealt with and settled as he willed. By reason of this report Gierolomo very soon gathered together a great sum of

money made up of the many gifts which were sent to him by all Christian princes, so that in the whole of Italy there was to be found no man richer than he. And in this wise it came to pass that by the end of his year of penance he found himself well content with his lot, and the possessor of great riches. Next the Pope created him a noble of Naples and of Forli, and of many other cities besides. So Gierolomo, from the low condition in which he was born, became distinguished and illustrious in the same way as Tullus Hostilius and David, who spent their youth in feeding sheep, but later on in their lives the one reigned over and doubled the extent of the Roman empire, and the other became the chief of the kingdom of the Jews.

As soon as the fable told by Isabella had come to an end in the fashion they all desired, Molino rose to his feet and said: "There was no need, Signora Isabella, for you to excuse yourself in any way at the beginning of your fable, see-

ing that it has far outdone all those which have been told this evening." To this Isabella replied: "Signor Antonio, if I indeed believed what you say to be the honest truth I should be greatly elated, because in that case I should have won the praise of him who is praised by all. But because you say this by way of jest, I am content to remain in my ignorance, leaving the glory of success to these my sisters, who are of more brilliant parts than I am." But, in order that the discussion might not be farther prolonged, the Signora made a sign that Isabella should let follow her enigma at once; whereupon the damsel, still elated with the praise given her, spake thus:

Good sir, there was a time I trow,
Which time is gone for ever now;
Wherefore the thought comes back to me,
That once I something gave to thee
Which I had not. Now I decline
To give it, though 'tis really mine.
Hard must it be for you to dream
Of what I was, what now I seem;

How once I had what now I lack.
Therefore into the streets go back,
And call on one who lacks it too,
And beg her give this boon to you.

Here Isabella brought her enigma to an end, and because it was one full of deep mystery, it was interpreted by the company in varying wise, but not a single one fully grasped its meaning. When Isabella perceived this, with bright and merry face she said: "With your leave, ladies and gentlemen, I will at once explain the meaning of the enigma which I have just recited to you. In sooth, it is intended to describe a love-sick lady not yet married who was altogether subdued by the love of a certain gentleman. But after she was married to another she would have no more dealings with her lover, and on this account she persuaded him to take his way about the streets, seeking the love of those ladies who had no husbands."

The skilful solution of Isabella's subtle enigma delighted the company

greatly, and they one and all praised it. But now already the crested cock had announced the coming of the bright morning; so the illustrious company took leave of the Signora, who, with a joyous face, begged them all to return in good time to the meeting-place on the following evening, and they one and all promised with the best grace to obey her

The End of the Twelfth Night.



Night the Thirteenth.





Night the Thirteenth.

PHŒBUS had already taken his departure from this land of ours, and the clear brightness of the day was gone and faded, so that now no longer did the forms of objects round about make themselves clearly apparent, when the Signora, having come out of her chamber accompanied by the ten damsels, went to the head of the staircase to give glad-some welcome to the gentle company who had already disembarked from their boats. Then, when all had taken their seats according to their rank, the Signora said: "It seems to me that to-night it would be well and becoming—after you have danced according to your wont and sung a canzonet—for all the gentlemen as well as all the ladies to tell each one

a fable, forasmuch as it is not seemly that this burden should be laid on the ladies alone. And thus (always supposing that what I propose meets with the approval of this honourable company) each one will tell his story on the one condition that it shall be short; so that, on this the last night of carnival, everyone may have time to set forth his fable. Now the Signor Ambassador, as the chief person amongst us, shall fill the first place, and then, one by one, you shall all take turns according to your degree." The proposal of the Signora won the approval of all, and, after they had danced somewhat, she gave command to the Trevisan and to Molino to attune their instruments and to sing their canzonet thereto. Whereupon these loyal sons of obedience took up their lutes and discoursed the following song:

SONG.

The choicest gifts of beauty and of grace
That mortal beauty ever knew,

Lady, kind Nature lavishes on you.
 When gazing on your lovely face,
Your bosom into perfect beauty swelling,
Where Love holds sway, proud of his ivory throne,
 I hear my fancy telling
That surely you were made in God's own place,
And sent on earth to honour us alone,
To bid us for our trespasses atone,
 And teach how far excelling
Our feverish life of heat and cold
Those glories are the blest in Heaven behold.

The canzonet sung by the Trevisan and Molino delighted all the listeners, and they applauded it heartily. When it had come to an end, the Signora begged the Signor Ambassador to make a beginning of the story-telling, and he, who had nought of rustic incivility in his manner, at once began in the following wise.

THE FIRST FABLE.

Maestro Gasparino, a physician, by the virtue of his art works a cure on certain madmen.

THE burden which the Signora has laid upon me, in bidding me relate to you a fable, is indeed a very heavy one, forasmuch as in my opinion this office pertains to ladies rather than to men; but, since it is her desire and the desire of this honourable and worshipful company as well, that I should play the storyteller, I will set to work with all my strength to satisfy your wishes, and though I may not succeed in pleasing you entirely, I hope I may divert you somewhat by what I am going to tell you.

In England there once lived a certain man, very rich, and the head of his family, who had only one son, a youth named Gasparino, whom he sent in

course of time to Padua in order that he might apply himself to the study of letters. The youth, however, took very little care to acquire any knowledge of literature, and much less in endeavouring to surpass his fellow-students in the pursuit of learning, seeing that he employed almost the whole of his time in playing cards and other games of chance, which he practised diligently in the company of certain dissolute companions of his who were entirely given up to lascivious and worldly pleasures. In this course of life he consumed the whole of his time, and his money as well, and, instead of studying medicine and the learned works of Galen, as he was in duty bound to do, he spent his energies in mastering the game of bowls, in playing cards, and in indulging himself in such practices as alone gave him delight.

When five years had passed away he returned to his native country, whereupon all those who met him saw clearly enough that during his course of study

he had gone backwards instead of forwards. He wished, forsooth, to make believe to be a Roman, but all his friends set him down as a barbarian and a Chaldean,¹ and after a little he fell into such ill repute amongst all the people of the city in which he dwelt, that men pointed at him with their fingers, so that he became a byword and the talk of the town. I leave you to picture to yourselves how great must have been the grief of his unfortunate father, who in any case would much liefer have lost all his money, and his daily bread as well, than have laid aside the pride which he had nourished of making his son a man of mark, and was now in a fair way to lose both the one and the other. Wherefore, one day, the father, hoping by this means to assuage somewhat the grief which tormented him, called his son to him, and having opened the chest in which he kept his money and his jewels, he gave

¹ *Chaldeo*—by metaphor a violent and furious fellow.

the youth, who of a truth was in no way deserving of such bounty, the half of all his goods, saying to him, ' My son, take this your share of your paternal heritage and get you gone from my presence, so that I may see your face no more; for I would rather be a childless man than have living with me a son who brings shame upon me through his infamous life.'

In less time than it takes me to tell the son laid hands on the money and jewels, and, readily obeying his father's injunction, took his departure. Having travelled a great way from his home, he came one day to the outskirts of a forest, near which he perceived a mighty river. On this spot he set to work to build a great house of marble, fitted with bronze doors, and round about it he caused the river to flow on all sides, cutting certain trenches and watercourses in such wise that he could make the water rise and fall according as it best suited his purpose. Thus he dug some of the trenches

in such manner that the water could be made to rise therein to the full height of a man, in others it would rise up to a man's eyes, in others to his throat, in others to his breast, in others to his navel, in others to his thigh, and in others to his knees. To the side of each of these trenches he caused to be attached an iron chain, and over the entrance door of this great house he set up a tablet with the following inscription written thereon, 'The place where madmen are cured.'

In the course of time the fame of Gasparino's house spread abroad, and it became known to all men; so that from various quarters madmen were brought thither to be cured in such vast numbers that it might have been said to rain madmen. When they were brought in the master of the place caused them to be put in the trenches he had made, according to the degree of the madness which afflicted them. Some of them he treated with blows, others with vigils and fasts,

others needed only to breathe the fine pure air round about, and thus, little by little, he would bring them back to their right minds. In front of the entrance door in the spacious courtyard he was accustomed to keep some of the madmen, and men of weak intellect, whose wits had been disordered through being struck by the exceeding hot rays of the sun.

It chanced one day that a huntsman passed by this spot carrying a hawk upon his fist, and accompanied by a great number of hounds. As soon as the madmen who were in the courtyard caught sight of him, they were greatly astonished at the spectacle of a man thus riding by with his hawks and his dogs, and one of them straightway began to question him as to what might be the nature of the bird which he carried on his fist, and whether it was a trap or a snare wherewith to catch other birds, and for what reason he kept and nurtured it. The huntsman at once answered, 'This

bird which you see here is called a hawk, and is very rapacious by nature; these other animals are dogs, who go a-searching for certain fat birds, very good to eat, called quails. When they have found them, this hawk captures them, and then I eat them.' Whereupon the madman questioned him again, saying, 'Now tell me, I pray you, what is the price you paid for these dogs, and for the hawk, and for the horse which you are riding?' The huntsman answered, 'I bought my horse for the sum of ten ducats, my hawk cost me eight ducats, and my dogs twelve. Besides this, they cost me twenty ducats every year for their nutriment.' 'Now, prithee, tell me,' said the madman, 'and tell me truly, how many quails do you catch in the course of the year, and what is the value of the same?' The huntsman made answer, 'I take two hundred or more, and they are worth to me at least two ducats.' Then the madman (who in this matter was assuredly no madman, but rather one of

good sense) raised his voice and cried, 'Get you gone quickly, madman that you are! You spend fifty ducats a year in order that you may gain two, and in this reckoning you take no account of the time you lose in getting them. Fly, for God's sake, fly! For if the master of this place should chance to find you here, he will certainly put you into one of these trenches, where you will be drenched and half drowned. I myself am a poor fool, but you forsooth are a bigger fool than I am — bigger, indeed, than the worst of the madmen in this place.'

The fable told by the Signor Ambassador won the praise of all the company, although it partook little of the nature of a fable, being a record of sober truth, seeing that huntsmen as a rule surpass all other fools in their folly; that is to say, a man, when he has not enough to live upon, loses his time and his money as well in following the chase. The Signor Ambassador, not wishing to fall

behind any of the others in his task of story-telling, next propounded a choice enigma in the following words :

Say, have you heard them tell
About a creature said to dwell
Far in the East? Though full of guile,
'Tis conquered by a maiden's smile,
And in her lap will listen tame —
No lion, though it bears the name.
Contented in her arms to die,
Its horned head it carries high,
And by its loving tears they say
All poisonous bane is washed away.

The graceful enigma set by the Signor Ambassador gave the company no less delight than the fable he had told to them, for it presented to the minds of the ladies a suggestion of unknown delight, and, though all guessed its meaning, nevertheless not one of the company was disposed to declare it, but prudently waited until the ambassador himself should unfold it. After a while, he, with a smiling face, declared that the answer to it was the unicorn, an animal which, al-

though it is treacherous and immoderate, holds the estate of virginity in such high esteem that it will hide its head in a damsel's lap, and let itself be there killed by the huntsman. The Signora, who was sitting by the side of the ambassador, now began her fable in the following wise.

THE SECOND FABLE.

One Diego, a Spaniard, purchases a great quantity of hens of a peasant, and, being in debt therefor, puts a cheat upon the peasant and upon a Carmelite friar as well.



THE fable which the Signor Ambassador has just told to us was so fine and so delightful a piece of work that I cannot hope to follow it up by anything of my own which shall have one-thousandth part of its merit. But, so that I may not show myself in any way reluctant to conform to the proposition which I made at the beginning of this evening's entertainment, and before the Signor Amba-

sador began to tell his story, I will relate a fable which will show you that in spite and malice the Spaniards surpass even the roughest boors.

In Spain is situated a city called Cordova, close to which there runs a very pleasant stream, the river Bacco. In this town was born a certain Diego, a very crafty fellow, well-to-do in the world, and one altogether given over to fraud and deception. This man, having a desire one day to give a supper to certain of his companions, and not being provided with the wherewithal to carry out his desire, cast about in his mind how he might play a trick upon a neighbouring peasant, and thus, at the poor fellow's expense, make a feast for his friends, which thing he brought to pass exactly according to his own wishes.

Diego, having betaken himself to the piazza in order to buy some fowls, met there the peasant, who had for sale a great quantity of hens and capons and eggs, and for these Diego now began to

chaffer, promising at last to pay for all the fowls which were there four florins, a sum with which the peasant professed to be well satisfied. Diego, having hired a porter, sent him at once to his house with the fowls, without, however, paying the cost of the same to the seller, though he was besought by the peasant to settle his debt forthwith. But Diego protested that he had not the money in his pocket; at the same time telling the peasant that, if he would go with him as far as the monastery of the Carmine, where his uncle,¹ one of the brothers, was living, the money for the price of the hens would at once be forthcoming. And with these words they went in one another's company to the aforesaid monastery. It chanced that in the church of the monastery certain ladies were assembled to make their confessions to one of the brothers. But Diego, contriving to get speech with the monk, whispered in his

¹ Orig., *suo barba*. In the Lombard districts "*barba*" is often used for "*zio*," an uncle.

ear, Good father, this peasant who has come hither in my company is my gossip, a fellow who carries divers heretical notions in his head. And though he is well-to-do in the world, and comes of decent family, he is not over-strong in the brain, and is oftentimes afflicted with the falling sickness. It is now full three years since he went to confession. He comes now and then into a saner mind, and on this account I, moved thereto by charity, and by fraternal love, and by friendship, and by the tie of spiritual brotherhood which exists between us, have given a promise to his wife so to manage that he should confess himself. And for the reason that the good name and fame of your saintly life is so well known in all the city and the country round about, we have come to your reverence, begging you that, of your supreme goodness and for the love of God, you will vouchsafe to listen to him patiently and to correct his faults.'

In reply to this, the brother said that

at this present moment he was somewhat fully occupied, but that as soon as he should have attended to the needs of these ladies (pointing to them with his hand) he would be quite willing to hear the confession. Then, having called the peasant to him, he begged him to wait a little, promising the while that he would quickly do all he wanted. Whereupon the peasant, deeming that what the brother said had reference to the money which was owing to him, declared that he would willingly wait. And, having done this, the crafty Diego went off, leaving the poor swindled peasant waiting in the church. The brother, as soon as he had in truth finished his task of confessing the ladies, called to the peasant to come over and settle himself down on the stool. The fellow came quickly enough, and, having uncovered his head, forthwith demanded of the good brother his money. But the brother bade him to go down on his knees at once, and directed him, after having crossed him-

self, to say the paternoster. Then the peasant, finding that he had been tricked and defrauded, flew into a violent fit of rage and anger, and, looking up to heaven and blaspheming, he cried out, 'Ah, wretch that I am! what evil have I done that I should be thus cruelly tricked by this Spanish knave? I do not want to confess or to receive absolution. I want the money he promised that you would give me.' The good brother, who knew nought of what these words might mean, said to the peasant by way of rebuke, 'They speak truly who say that you are possessed with a devil, and are not in your right mind;' and, having opened his missal, he began a form of conjuration, as if he had some evil spirit or other to deal with. The peasant, who was by this time in no condition to endure such words as these, demanded with a great uproar to be paid the money which had been promised him by Diego, declaring that he was in no wise possessed, nor a madman, but that he had been cozened

out of what poor wares he had by this rascally Spaniard. Girding and lamenting in this fashion, he called upon the bystanders for assistance, and having seized the monk by his hood, he cried out, 'I will never leave hold of you until you shall have handed over to me my money.'

The good monk, when he saw how things stood and that he could no longer defend himself from the peasant, excused himself with soft and wheedling speech by saying that he himself had been tricked by the Spaniard. But on the other hand the peasant (holding him firmly the while by the hood) affirmed that the monk had duly made this promise on his own account, saying, 'Did you not promise me, in so many words, that you would quickly despatch this affair of mine?' 'I promised,' answered the brother, 'that I would hear your confession.' While they were thus wrangling together, there came up certain old men, who began to work upon the good

monk's conscience, and in the end constrained him to pay to the peasant what the Spaniard owed him. Thus the wily accursed and villainous Diego gave a sumptuous feast to his friends with the hens and capons before mentioned, showing clearly thereby that the malice of a Spaniard surpasses that of any other ruffian you can find in all the world.

The Signor Ambassador, who had lent the closest attention to the fable told in such marvellous wise by the gentle Signora, now gave it his warmest commendation, declaring that by the telling of it she had completely worsted himself as a story-teller. And this saying all the company loudly confirmed with one voice. Then the Signora, marking how high was the praise thus given to her, smiled merrily, and, having turned her sweet face towards the ambassador, spake thus :

To my sire, the subtle breath
Of life my mother gave — and death,
I took being from his grave,


And nurture kind my mother gave
To me and to my brothers too,
Till we to full perfection grew.
Long together did we dwell,
Until there came a foeman fell,
Who many of us crushed and killed.
Sure we with love and grace are filled,
Since we give life and daily bread
To him who snaps our vital thread.

Not one of the company succeeded in grasping the meaning of this enigma, although long time was spent in making comments thereupon; wherefore the Signora, perceiving that no one was likely to hit the mark, said: "Ladies and gentlemen, this enigma of mine means nothing more nor less than the wheat which is born from the grain of wheat, its father, and from the earth its mother. The earth destroys the corn, and in destroying it the wheat is born, which the earth nourishes until it grows to maturity. The wheat lives in close union with its brothers, that is, the grains in the ear, until the day when the miller crushes

out its life by grinding it in his mill. And so great is its benevolence that it gives life to him who destroys it." The solution of the Signora's enigma won the praise of all, and, when she had concluded it, Signor Pietro Bembo began his fable in the following words.

THE THIRD FABLE.

A German and a Spaniard happening to sit at meat together, there arises between their servants a dispute as to which was the most liberal, which question in the end was settled in favour of the German.

 HE fable just told to us by our worthy Signora brings back to my memory a certain dispute which arose from the envy kindled between the servants of a German and of a Spaniard who chanced to meet at the same table, and although this fable of mine is very short, it may nevertheless be found entertaining and a source of pleasure to many.

It happened one day that a German and a Spaniard, having arrived at the same hostelry, took their meat together, being served with many delicate viands of all sorts and in great abundance. As they were thus dining the Spaniard handed to his servant now a morsel of meat and now a morsel of fowl, giving him to eat now this thing and now that. The German, on the other hand, went on eating silently, swallowing one thing after another without thinking in any way of his servant. On this account there arose between the servants a feeling of great jealousy, the servant of the German declaring that the Spaniards were the most liberal and regardful of men, and the servant of the Spaniard confirming what he said. But after the German had finished his meal, he took the dish with all the meat that was therein, and, handing it to his servant, he bade him take his supper thereof. Whereupon the servant of the Spaniard, being filled with envy at the good luck

of his companion, recalled the opinion he had just given, and murmuring to himself spake these words: 'Now I know well that the Germans are liberal beyond all other men.'

This fable teaches us that no one is ever contented with his own lot. Messer Pietro Bembo without any farther delay set his enigma in the following words:

I dwell in such a lofty spot
That soaring wings can reach me not;
Much help I give to feeble sight,
Working alone by wisdom's might.
I high exalt the soul serene,
But never let my light be seen
By those who claim too much of me.
Oft am I made appear to be
What I am not, just through the deed
Of things that neither know nor heed.

"This enigma," said Messer Pietro, "simply describes the science of astrology, which must needs be prosecuted in some lofty spot, up to which one could

not fly even with wings." As soon as he had finished the exposition of his subtly-devised riddle, the Signora Veronica rose to her feet and in this wise began her fable, speaking thus.

THE FOURTH FABLE.

Fortunio, a servant, endeavouring to crush a fly, kills his master, and saves himself from the gallows by a pleasantry.



WILL first tell this illustrious company that I have often heard it urged by men of weight that misdeeds which are wrought unwittingly do not carry the guilt of those done with intent; hence we look more lightly on the transgressions of fools and children, and of people of a like condition, than on those committed by graver folk. Forasmuch as it is now my turn to tell a story, I will tell of the adventure which befell one Fortunio, a varlet, who, desiring to

kill a horse-fly which was annoying his master, killed inadvertently the master himself.

There lived in the city of Ferrara a rich grocer of good descent, who had in his service Fortunio, a fat good-tempered fellow of very slender wit. Now in the great heats the grocer was wont to lie down to sleep in the middle of the day, and at such times it was Fortunio's part to keep off the flies with a fan, lest they should disturb his master. One day it chanced that, amongst the others, was a very greedy meddlesome horse-fly, which took no heed of Fortunio's fanning, nor of his strokes, but alighted constantly on the grocer's bald pate and stung him grievously. And though the fly was chased away three or four times, it always came back to give fresh trouble. At last the servant, incensed at the boldness and persistency of the fly, rashly made trial to kill it when it was about to settle again on his master's temple and suck his blood. Simple fool that he was, he

caught up a weighty bronze pestle, and, striking at the fly with all his might with the intent to kill it, he made an end of the grocer instead. As soon as Fortunio saw that he had slain his master and thereby made himself liable to death by the law, he took counsel with himself how he might best save his neck, and first resolved to seek safety in flight, but he afterwards fixed upon another scheme, which was to bury the corpse secretly. Therefore, having wrapped up the dead body of his master in a sack and carried it into a garden adjacent to the shop, he buried it there. This done he went to the sheepfold, and, having chosen a big old ram, he took it and threw it down the well.

As the master did not appear at his usual hour in the evening the wife's suspicion fell upon Fortunio, and she questioned him as to her husband's whereabouts, but the fellow declared stoutly that he knew nothing of it. Then the good wife, overcome with

grief, began to weep and to call for her husband aloud, but she called in vain. She went to her kinsfolk and told them her grief; whereupon they sought the governor of the city, and laid the crime to Fortunio's charge, demanding that he should be imprisoned and put to the question, in order to make him tell what had become of his master. The governor, having put the servant in hold and tied him to the rope, gave him the strap-pado as prescribed by law, on account of the charges against him. Handling of this sort was not to his taste, and he forthwith promised to tell all he knew, if they would let him down. So they brought him before the judge, and this was the cunning tale he had prepared for their befooling: 'Yesterday, O judge! when I was asleep near the well, I was awakened by a great noise, as of some mighty rock being hurled down into the water below. In my amazement I ran to the well and looked into it, but the water was quite clear and I could see

nothing amiss ; so I turned to go back to the house, when the same noise again met my ears. I am now quite sure in my mind that my master, when trying to draw some water up out of the well, fell down into it. Now, that the truth of the matter may be laid bare, I make petition that all now present may go to the spot : then I will descend into the well and disclose what I may find therein.' The judge was favourable to Fortunio's prayer, holding that experiment is the surest proof, and that no evidence can equal what is brought before one's eyes, and betook himself to the well, bidding the whole assembly follow. There went not only the worshipful persons who were about the judge, but also a vast crowd of the common people, who were curious to learn what might be the issue of the affair.

Fortunio, obeying the commandment of the judge, went straightway down the well, and, when he had reached the bottom, made believe to be searching for

his master's body in the water ; but what he found was the carcass of the old ram which he himself had lately cast in. Feigning to be vastly amazed at this, the cunning fellow bawled up from the bottom of the well : ' O my mistress ! tell me whether your husband, my poor master, had horns or not ; for I have alighted on somebody down here who has got an enormous pair, both long and large. Is it possible that he can be your husband ? ' And when the good wife heard Fortunio's question she was so much overcome with shame that she could not find a word to say for herself. Meanwhile the bystanders waited, open-mouthed with curiosity, to set eyes on this corpse with horns, and to see whether it really was the body of the missing grocer or not ; and when they saw hauled up Fortunio's old ram, they all clapped their hands, and were shaken by loud laughter. The judge, when he saw the issue of Fortunio's search, deemed that the foolish fellow was acting in good

faith, and that he verily believed what he brought out of the well to be the remains of his master. On this account the judge let him go free, as innocent, but the grocer was never seen more, and the good wife, to her dying day, bore the shame anent the horns which Fortunio's cunning trick had cast upon her.

The men and the ladies as well laughed heartily over the story of the old ram in the well, but chiefly they were diverted at the confusion brought upon the wife by Fortunio's trick. Forasmuch as the evening was now advanced, and divers gentlefolk had yet to tell their stories, the Signora Veronica without pause put her enigma, which ran as follows :

In the ground my head is buried,
Yet with care I'm never harried.
In my early youth and fresh,
White and tender is my flesh,
Green my tail. Of lowly plight,
The rich man's scorn, the boor's delight.
The peasant on me sets good store,
The noble casts me from his door.

This enigma of the Signora Veronica won praise from all the company, and although nearly everyone mastered its meaning, none was willing to take upon himself the honour of unfolding it, but left this task rather to the Signora herself. Noting the silence of the company, she said : " Although my wit is slender, I will, if it pleases you, set forth to the best of my poor ability the solution of my riddle. It is the leek, which as you all know lives with its head underground, and has a green tail, and is favoured less by lords than by labourers on the table." When Veronica had spoken and unfolded her pretty enigma the Signora called upon Signor Bernardo Capello to narrate one of his fables, counselling him to be brief, as the night was far advanced, and he at once cleared his mind of serious thoughts and thus began.

THE FIFTH FABLE.

Vilio Brigantello kills a robber who was set in ambush to murder him.



VERY famous poet has said that the man who takes delight in beguiling others must not cry out and lament if by chance a cheat should be put upon himself. I have remarked that those who have an inclination to trick their fellows are very often, or I might say always, tricked themselves. This same fate befell a robber, who, having made up his mind to slay a certain craftsman, was killed by his intended victim.

In Pistoia, a city of Tuscany between Florence and Lucca, there dwelt an artisan, very rich, and possessed of great store of money, who was called by name Vilio Brigantello. But this man, on account of the fear of robbers which haunted him, feigned to be living in a state of

great poverty, dwelling all by himself without either wife or servants in a small cottage, which however was well furnished, and full of all the things which men find necessary for their existence. And in order to make it yet more apparent to men how poor and beggarly was his estate, he clad himself always in the commonest, meanest, and dirtiest attire, and kept a strict guard over the coffer which held his coin. Vilio was very alert, and a most careful workman to boot, but in the spending of his money he was avaricious and a miser, allowing himself no better diet than bread and cheese with wine thereto, and the roots of plants.

Now it came to pass that certain cunning and crafty robbers, suspecting with good reason that Vilio was the possessor of a good sum of money, went one night to his cottage at the hour which seemed to them most suited to their purpose of robbing him. And for the reason that they were unable with their crowbars

and other implements either to open the door or to break in the same, and growing at the same time somewhat fearful lest they should arouse the neighbours by the noise they made in their evil work, they settled upon a plan of tricking Vilio, and thus accomplishing their purpose in another way. It chanced that amongst these thieves there was one who was very familiar and well acquainted with this Vilio, and who had often made great show of his friendship ; so much so, that now and again he had taken him home to his own house to dine. The thieves now tied up in a sack the one who was the leader of their band and their guide, and made believe that he was dead ; then, having carried him just as he was to the artisan's cottage, the fellow who put himself forward as Vilio's friend advanced and begged him urgently to take the sack into his charge and guard it well until they should come back to fetch it, promising the while that they would return before long. Vilio

who knew nothing of what was behind, let them bring into the house the body they had with them without hindrance, after listening to the importunity of his pretended friend. Meantime the robbers had arranged a plan amongst themselves that as soon as Vilio might be sound asleep their leader should get out of the sack, and, after having killed the artisan, should lay hands on all his money and whatever of his effects might seem best worth having.

Thus the sack with the robber inside was placed within the cottage while Vilio was busily working at his craft close to the candle. Now and then he cast a glance towards the sack in which the robber was hidden (as is the habit of those who are timid by nature and easily stricken with fear), and it seemed to him as if the body stirred somewhat within the sack. Thereupon, having risen from his seat, he quickly snatched up a stick of myrtle wood thickly studded with knots, and brought the cudgel to bear

upon the skull of the robber with such good purpose that he straightway made a dead man of him, making him a real corpse in lieu of a pretended one. The fellows of the robber aforesaid, when they had awaited his return until the breaking of the day and saw no sign of their leader, imagined his absence was caused by the fact that he had fallen asleep. So, being more afeared on account of the daylight which was now fast approaching than for the safety of their friend, they took their way back to the cottage of the artisan and asked him for the sack which they had yesterday left in his charge. As soon as Vilio had closed the door and well barricaded the same, he handed the sack over to them, addressing them the while in a loud voice: 'Yesterday you brought me, instead of a corpse, a live man in this sack, with the view of frightening me. Now therefore I, to frighten you in turn, give back to you a corpse instead of a living man.' When the band of robbers heard these

words they stood like men confounded, and, having opened the sack, they found in good sooth the dead body of their trusty mate therein. Then, in order to pay due honour to their daring leader, they cast his body with many sighs and tears into the sea, where it sank out of sight. Thus the man who had planned in his mind to trick and deceive the artisan, was himself tricked and deceived.

With these words the Signor Bernardo brought to an end his ingeniously-told fable, which amused greatly all those who listened to it. The Signora thereupon begged him to let follow his enigma at once, according to the rule, and he began it forthwith in the following words :

From sire alone I sprang and grew ;
No mother dear I ever knew ;
But fate decreed that all must give
Their fostering aid to make me live.
Soon to bulk immense I grow,
And o'er the world I spread and flow,
And though to some I'm fierce and fell,
Most men my praises loud will tell.

Many of the listeners believed that they had divined the meaning of this graceful and scholarly enigma, but it proved that the belief of all of them was ill founded, seeing that their understanding had in every case wandered far from the truth. Wherefore Capello, perceiving that the discussion threatened to be long, spake thus: "Ladies and gentlemen, let us lose no more time, because the enigma I have set you to guess means nothing else than play, which springs from a father alone, and is supported and nourished by all men. In a very brief space of time it has spread over the entire world, and it is welcomed and made much of in such manner that, even though a man may lose on account of it, he does not on this score chase it away from him, but still gets pleasure from its existence." This explanation of the subtly-conceived enigma gratified all the listeners greatly, especially Signor Antonio Bembo, who was much addicted to play. But, seeing that the hours of

the night were passing, or rather flying, the Signora gave direction to Signora Chiara to make a beginning of her fable, and the latter, having got up from her seat and placed herself on a higher chair — she being somewhat short of stature — at once began to speak as follows.

THE SIXTH FABLE.

Lucietta, the mother of Lucilio, a useless and good-for-nothing fellow, sends him out to find the good day. This he does, and returns home bearing with him the fourth part of a certain treasure.



I HAVE always understood, gracious ladies, from the writings of the world's sages, that Fortune helps on those who are alert and watchful, and puts to flight the timid and panic-stricken. And that this saying is a true one I will prove to you by telling you a very brief fable, which perchance may be somewhat of a pleasure and satisfaction to you.

In Cesenna, an illustrious city of Romagna, near to which flows a river called the Savio, there once dwelt a little widow, very poor, but of good repute, and Lucietta was her name. This woman had a son, the most useless and sleepy-headed loon that nature ever made, who, when once he had gotten himself to bed, would never get up therefrom till noon, and then, raising himself up, he would gape and rub his eyes, stretching his arms and his legs out of the bed like the good-for-nothing rascal he was. On account of all this his mother was grievously vexed, because she had formed a hope that this son of hers might prove to be the staff and support of her old age. Wherefore, in order to make him a careful, vigilant, and accomplished man, she made it her practice every day to instruct him in this fashion: ‘My son, any diligent and cautious man, who wishes to have the good day, must needs rise up betimes at the breaking of the dawn, forasmuch as Fortune stretches out her hand to aid

those who are on the alert, and not to those who lie asleep in bed. Thus, O my son! if you will take the advice I give to you, you shall find the good day, and rest content therewith.'

Lucilio (for so the widow's son was named), more ignorant than ignorance itself, failed to gather the meaning of his mother's exhortation, and, considering the husk rather than the kernel of her words, he roused himself from the deep and profound sleep that was upon him, and went out of the house. When he had gone forth from one of the city gates, he straightway composed himself to sleep in the open air, stretching himself right across the highway, where he greatly hindered the course of all those who were journeying towards the city, and in like manner those who were coming out therefrom. Now this same day it happened by chance that three men, citizens of Cesenna, were bound out of the town on a certain errand, which was to dig up a rich treasure they had discovered, and

to carry it home with them. It was after they had dug it up, and when they were minded to transport it into the city, that they found themselves face to face with Lucilio, who was lying down on the highway. The fellow, however, was not at this moment asleep, but was on the alert to find the good day after the fashion which his mother had counselled him to follow. As the first of the three citizens passed by where Lucilio lay, he said to him, 'My friend, may you have the good day!' whereupon Lucilio answered, 'Aha! I have one of them,' meaning thereby to speak of the day. The young citizen, with his mind filled with thoughts of the treasure, and putting a meaning upon the words other than that which they were intended to bear, deemed at once that they had reference to himself; which thing, indeed, was no marvel, seeing it is written that those who are conscious of their misdeeds are always prone to imagine every word they hear spoken to be spoken of them. The second citi-

zen, as he passed Lucilio, saluted him in like fashion, and gave him the good day, and to him Lucilio replied that he had two of them, meaning to say that he had now two of the good days. The third citizen came close behind the other, and he also in exactly the same manner gave the good day to the fellow lying all on the road. Whereupon Lucilio, now on the alert, got up on his feet and said, 'And now I have all three of them; of a truth the plan I laid has prospered for me in marvellous wise;' wishing to let it be known by these words that he had now three good days.

The three citizens, when they heard the last speech of Lucilio, fell into great terror and affright lest the youth should go to the governor of the town, and make known to him how they had been occupying themselves; so they bade him come to them, and forthwith narrated to him the whole story of the treasure, giving him in the end a fourth part thereof as his share. With his heart filled with

joy, Lucilio laid hands on his share, and, having taken his way back to his home, he gave over the treasure to his mother, saying, 'Good mother, of a truth the grace of God must be with me, seeing that in following the commandment you laid upon me I have found the good day. Take now this money, and keep it well, so that it may serve for our support.' Whereupon the mother, joyful in the possession of the money which her son had gained, encouraged him always to keep a sharp look-out for the future, for the reason that he might very likely meet with other good days like to this one.

The Signora, perceiving that Madonna Chiara's fable had now come to an end, begged that she would oblige her by setting an enigma for the company to guess, so that the rule they had hitherto followed might not be broken, and Chiara, in whose mind ill thoughts had no place, gave her enigma in the following words.

Full many beasts of every kind
In nature's kingdom we may find ;
But one there is of tender mood,
Of loving heart and spirit good,
Which, when its sire grown blind and weak,
With age his food no more can seek,
Will guard him safe and feed him well
Within a warm and cosy cell.
So none may ever blame its greed,
Or tax it with ungrateful deed.

“This enigma of mine which I have just propounded is intended to show forth the virtue of gratitude under the form of a bird called pola,¹ which, when it sees its father no longer able to fly on account of the weakness of old age, exhibits its gratitude by preparing for him a nest, and by giving him food upon which he may nourish himself till the day of his death.”

The Signor Beltramo, who was sitting near to Chiara, perceiving that his turn had now come to tell a story, and feeling reluctant to wait for the command of the

¹ A chough.

Signora, at once began to tell his fable in the following wise, with a merry look upon his face the while.

THE SEVENTH FABLE.

Giorgio, a servant, makes a covenant with Pandolfo his master, with respect to his service, and ends by summoning him before the tribunal.



THE illustrious gentlemen and the lovesome ladies whom I see around me have already narrated such a vast number of stories that meseems there is left little or no material to serve my needs. But so as not to mar in any way the fair process of our entertainment I will put forth the best power that is in me to tell you a fable which, though it may not shine with great wit, will at least give you somewhat of diversion and pleasure, as you will presently see.

Pandolfo Zabbarella, a gentleman of Padua, was in his day a brave and

great-souled man, and one of much forethought. It happened, once upon a time, that he found himself in great need of a servant who should attend to his wants, and not being able to find one exactly to his taste, he engaged himself at last with a fellow who, although outwardly he gave fair promise, was in sooth both crafty and malicious. Ser Pandolfo asked him whether he would be willing to come and live with him and be his servant, whereupon the man, whose name was Giorgio, replied that he was, making, however, a condition that no other service should be required of him than to attend to Messer Pandolfo's horse and to accompany him wherever he might go, seeing that he was unwilling to involve himself in any other duties than these. Pandolfo having assented to these terms, they were reduced by a notary to the form of an agreement, under which each one bound himself by promise to observe his contract, pledging all his possessions as security therefor.

One day, when Pandolfo was riding along a muddy and villainous road, his horse by accident floundered into a ditch and was unable to extricate himself therefrom by reason of the mud. Whereupon Pandolfo called upon his servant aloud to give assistance, fearing lest he should run into danger of losing his life. But the servant only stood still and stared at him, affirming that it was no business of his to give aid in such a case as this, seeing that no provision thereanent was to be found in the contract between them. Then, having drawn forth from his pouch the agreement, he began to read most minutely all its different headings to see whether there was in them any clause which would meet such a case as the one now in question. Meantime his master called out to him : ' For God's sake, my brother, help me quickly ! ' Whereupon the servant made answer : ' In sooth I cannot help you, forasmuch as to do so would be contrary to the form of our agreement. ' ' Then,

said Pandolfo, 'if you will not help me and deliver me from the danger I am in, I will not pay you your wages.' To these supplications Giorgio replied that he could not possibly do this because he would thus render himself liable to the penalties set down in the contract. And if by good fortune the master had not been helped out of his peril by the wayfarers who were passing along the road, he would assuredly have never been able to get free therefrom by his own efforts. On account of this adventure they entered into a fresh agreement, which they caused to be drawn up, by which the servant pledged himself, under certain penalties, to give assistance to his master whenever he might be called upon, and never to depart from him, or to leave his side.

It chanced one day that Pandolfo was walking with certain gentlemen of Venice in the church of St. Anthony,¹ and the

¹ Orig., *nella chiesa del Santo*. In Padua St. Anthony is always called *Il Santo*.

servant, obedient to the wish of his master expressed in the contract, walked there likewise, almost rubbing shoulders with him the while, and refusing to leave his side. Wherefore the gentlemen and all the others who were present laughed immoderately on account of this strange behaviour, and were diverted thereanent not a little. On this account the master, after he had returned to his house, took his servant sharply to task, telling him that he had behaved in an ill and sottish manner in walking in such fashion up and down the church, keeping himself so unduly close, and showing neither respect nor reverence to his master nor to the gentlemen who were then in his company. But the servant, shrugging his shoulders, affirmed that he had done nothing more than to obey the commands which were laid upon him, and forthwith cited the covenants of the agreement which were written in the deed lately made between them. On account of what had passed the master

desired that they should enter into a new contract, by the terms of which the master required the servant to keep himself at a greater distance; whereupon Giorgio followed Ser Pandolfo about all day long a hundred feet in the rear, and however loudly the master might call, and whatever signs he might make to the servant to bid him come anear, the fellow refused to lessen the distance between them a whit, but continued to follow his master at exactly the distance he was required to keep between them by their agreement, fearing lest by coming any nearer he might incur the legal penalty prescribed in the contract. But Pandolfo, irritated by the stupidity and lack of sense in his servant, explained to him that the term 'distance' in the contract should be held to signify a space of three feet.

The servant, who was now clearly enlightened as to the wishes of his master, forthwith took a stick three feet in length, and, placing one end thereof

against his own chest, and the other against his master's shoulders, followed him about in this fashion. The townsfolk and the craftsmen of the city, when they looked upon this strange sight, laughed long and loud at what they beheld, deeming that this servant must of a surety be a madman. But the master, who as yet knew not that the servant was following him with a stick bestowed in this wise, was mightily astonished when he found that all the passers-by were thus gaping and laughing at him. As soon as he had discovered the reason of their merriment, he flew in a rage, and rated his servant soundly, and made as if he would give him a grievous beating; but the fellow, with loud weeping and lamentation, began to excuse himself, saying: 'O master! you do wrong in wishing to beat me. Have I not made a bargain with you? have I not in sooth observed your commands in every respect? when have I ever gone against the least of them? Here is the deed; read

it, and then punish me if you can find that I have in any way been lacking in my duties.' And in this manner the servant, as before, got the better of his master.

It chanced that one day the master sent the servant to the butcher's shop to buy some meat, and — as it is the habit of masters sometimes — speaking ironically he said to Giorgio, 'Go on this errand, and see that you spend not more than a year over it.' Whereupon the servant, whose fault was that he obeyed too strictly his master's commands, went away to his own country, and there abode till the year had rolled away. On the first day of the succeeding twelvemonth he went back to his master, carrying with him the meat, whereupon Messer Pandolfo was greatly amazed, for the reason that he had long ago forgotten what he had ordered. He reproved the fellow on account of his flight, saying: 'You have come back a trifle too late, you thief who deserve hanging a thousand times!'¹ By

¹ Orig., *ladro da mille forche*.

God, I will make you pay as you deserve for all the trouble you have given me, you wretch, you rascal ! Do not think to get any penny of wage from me !' To this Giorgio replied that he had duly carried out all the clauses of the contract between them, and had obeyed to the letter all the commands of his master contained therein. 'Remember, good master, that you bade me be gone on my errand not more than a year, and here I am, back to the very day ; wherefore you must pay me the salary which is due to me.' And thus, when the cause was carried before the tribunal, the master was required by the sentence of the court to pay his servant the wages he had agreed to give him.

Although Signor Beltramo had borne himself somewhat bashfully in setting forth the beginning of his story, the listeners were in no way dissatisfied with the fable he told them ; nay rather, they with one voice gave it high praise, begging him at the same time that he would,

with his wonted kindness, set them an enigma to guess. Then he, unwilling to run counter to the wishes of such a gracious audience, spake in the following words :

Far in the sultry distant east,
There dwells a gentle kindly beast ;
Its head is large, its body small,
And patient is its mood withal.
With eyes bent on the ground it goes,
And from them oft the tear-drop flows.
I thus describe it clear and true,
So you may keep its form in view ;
For whoso gazes in its eyes,
Finds bane therein and straightway dies.

Signor Beltramo's graceful enigma was listened to by the assembly with somewhat of wonder, and no one grasped the meaning thereof. The explanation of it was that it was meant to describe a small animal called a *catopleba*,¹ which goes always with its eyes fixed on the

¹ *Catopleba* — a wild beast, little of body, heavy and slow ; his head so great that his body can scarce bear it. Whosoever looketh upon his eyes falls presently down dead.

ground. This beast, though it is fair to look upon, should be regarded by men with great caution, because in truth it bears death in its glance. Qualities like these may well be attributed to the devil, who urges on and cajoles a man, and afterwards kills him by means of some deadly sin, and leads him to the death eternal. As soon as the solution of this scholarly enigma was finished, Laurretta, who sat next to Signor Beltramo, thus began to tell her fable.

THE EIGHTH FABLE.

Gasparo, a peasant, having built a chapel, calls it after the name of Saint Montato, and puts the rector in possession thereof. The rector and his deacon pay a visit to the peasant in the course of which the deacon, without forethought, brings to pass a certain jest.



HE vice of gluttony is in sooth a heinous one, but it is nevertheless more tolerable than the vice of hypocrisy, forasmuch as the gluttonous man only puts a cheat

upon himself, while the hypocrite, with his simulated actions, seeks to deceive other men in his desire to appear to be what he is not, and to do what he has no notion of doing. All this came to pass in the case of a certain village priest, who, by the means of his hypocrisy, put an offence both upon his soul and on his body, as I will in a few words let you understand.

Close to the city of Padua there stands a village called Noventa, in which once dwelt a certain peasant, a rich man and very devout. This man, out of his devotion to religion and for the unburdening of his own sins as well as those of his wife, built a chapel, and, having endowed the same with a sufficient sum of money and called it by the name of Saint Honorato, presented a priest to be the rector and governor thereof, a man well versed in the canon law. One day, which happened to be the vigil of a certain saint—but not one commanded to be kept by our sacred mother the Church—the

rector aforesaid called for his deacon, and the two went together to pay a visit to Ser Gasparo, that is, to the peasant who had nominated him as governor of the chapel; whether for the furtherance of his own affairs, or for any other cause, I leave you to decide. When the two arrived, the good peasant, wishing to pay them due respect, caused to be got ready a sumptuous supper, with roast meats, tarts, and divers other good cheer, and was most pressing that they should remain for the night as guests under his roof. But the priest declared that he might on no account eat any meat that day, seeing that it was a sacred vigil; thus pretending to follow a habit which in sooth was entirely strange to him. He made a great show of fasting, and would not touch a morsel of the food for which his starving belly was crying. Upon this the peasant, being unwilling to divert him aught from the ways of devotion, gave demand to his wife that she should keep such dishes as were already

well forward in preparation in a cupboard to serve for the following day.

When the supper was finished, and when they had come to an end of their converse thereafter, they all betook themselves to rest in the peasant's house — Ser Gasparo with his wife, and the rector with the deacon, the two chambers being situated side by side. When midnight had come, the priest roused the deacon from his sleep, and in a whisper inquired of him where the goodwife had bestowed the tart which had been prepared for supper, declaring at the same time that, unless he could give his famishing body something to eat, he must needs die of hunger. Whereupon the deacon, obedient to his command, rose from bed, and, little by little, softly picked his steps to the spot where had been put away the remains of the feast, and from these he took a good slice of the tart. But on his way back, while he imagined he was going into his rector's chamber, he went by

accident into that of his host. Now, seeing that it was in the summer season, when the sun is high in Leo, the wife of the peasant lay stark naked and uncovered on the bed by reason of the great heat, and was making noises like the puffing of a pair of bellows. The deacon, deeming all the while that he was in the rector's chamber, said, 'Here, good master, take the tart you told me to fetch, and eat it, if such be your pleasure.' Hearing the goodwife puffing as vigorously as ever, the deacon went on to say that there was no need to blow the tart thus, seeing that it was cold already, but no heed was taken of his words, and the puffing and blowing still went on; so the deacon, growing somewhat angry and wanting to be rid of the tart, began to feel about with his hands, and, having alighted upon something which he took to be the rector's face, he put down the tart thereupon, knowing not that it was really the exposed hinder parts of the peasant's wife.

She, as soon as she was sensible of something cold upon her buttocks, awoke from her sleep and began to cry out aloud, and thus aroused her husband by the noise she made, and began to tell him what manner of thing it was that had befallen her. The deacon, who by this time had discovered how he had got into the wrong chamber, gently stole away into the one adjoining, where lay the rector. Ser Gasparo, having got out of bed and lighted a candle, made a search through all the house, and, when he beheld in what strange place the tart was, he was mightily amazed, deeming that it could only have come there through the working of some evil spirit or other. Whereupon he called the priest, and told him what had happened; so the poor wight was forced to set about singing psalms and hymns with an empty belly, and to sanctify the house in every part with holy water. This done, they all went back to their beds.

And thus (as I declared at the open-

ing of my story) hypocrisy brought an offence both to the soul and to the body of the priest, who, after planning to fill himself with the tart, had to go fasting against his will.

All the gentlemen laughed heartily when they heard tell how the peasant's wife had made a puffing and blowing as though she had been a pair of bellows, and how, as the tart was cold already, there was no need for her to cool it. But in order that an end might be made of the hearty laughter, the Signora gave the word to Lauretta to tell her enigma at once, and the damsel, still laughing, spake it in the following words :

Like lofty house I stand on high,
And yet no house in sooth am I.
Like mirror all around I shine,
And stand before the place divine
Where you repair to kneel and pray
That all your sins be washed away.
I live, but with my vital fire
I am consumed, and soon expire.
In every glorious fane I live,
And light to all who worship give.

But frail and brief my life withal,
I die if once to earth I fall.

The enigma thus set by the graceful Lauretta was accounted a very scholarly feat, and not a single one of the listeners failed to give high praise thereto, begging her at the same time to let follow forthwith the interpretation thereof. And the damsel, who desired nothing better, expounded it in the following words: "This enigma of mine is intended to describe the lamp which, placed before the sacrament, sheds light over every part of the church. Day and night it consumes itself, adorning the sanctuary the while, and its being is assuredly a frail one, seeing that it is made of glass." As soon as Lauretta had finished the explanation of her riddle, Signor Antonio Molino, whose turn in the story-telling came next, began to speak in these words.

THE NINTH FABLE.

A certain damsel, named *Filomena*, having been placed in a convent, falls into grave sickness. She is treated by divers physicians, and in the end is discovered to be hermaphrodite.

THE secrets of nature, most gracious ladies, are indeed mighty and beyond counting, nor does there live in all the world a man who by the powers of his intellect is able to realize the character thereof. On this account the thought has come into my mind to relate to you something which happened (for in sooth this is no fable) no great time ago in the city of Salerno.

In Salerno, a city of high renown, and one in which handsome women especially abound, there lived a certain gentleman belonging to the house of *Porti*, the head of a family and the father of one daughter, a damsel in the full flower of

her beauty and not yet past the sixteenth year of her age. This maiden, who was called Filomena, found somewhat irksome the pursuit of the many gallants of the city who flocked about her on account of her great beauty and sought to have her to wife. The father, seeing that his daughter was in a position of some danger, and fearing lest some ignominy or other should fall upon her by reason of the provocations she daily received, determined to take her to the convent of San Iorio in the city of Salerno ; not indeed with the view of letting her make formal profession of the monastic life, but in order that the sisters might have charge of her until such time as she should find a husband.

It happened that while this damsel was abiding in the convent she fell a victim to a grave attack of fever, during which she was nursed and tended with the greatest care and diligence. At the outset of her illness certain herbalists came to minister to her cure, and these, with

weighty oaths and professions, pledged themselves to bring her back to her former good health in a very short space of time. But all their efforts were of no avail. Whereupon her father caused to be brought to her divers physicians of great skill and experience, and some old women as well, who promised forthwith to give her a remedy which should work a cure of her malady. In the meantime the fair and gracious maiden was further afflicted by a grievous swelling of the groin, which grew to the bigness of a large ball. By reason of this ailment she suffered so great pain that she did nought else but groan and lament in piteous wise; so that it seemed as if she were indeed come very near to the end of her days. Her kinsfolk, deeply moved by the wretched lot of the young girl, sent to minister to her surgeons of renown, men highly commended as professors of their art; and some of these, after they had carefully viewed and examined the spot where the swelling was, declared

that the root of the herb marsh mallow, well cooked and mixed with the lard of swine, ought to be applied to the place in order to alleviate the pain and the swelling; others prescribed different treatment, while others denied that there would be any use in applying to the patient either this or that of the remedies which had been suggested. On one point they were all agreed, namely, that they must, in any case, cut open the swelling in order to remove therefrom the cause of the pain.

As soon as they had come to this decision they bade summon all the inmates of the convent, as well as divers matrons and kinsfolk of the gracious damsel who was sick. Then one of the aforesaid surgeons, a man who in skill greatly excelled all his colleagues, having taken his operating knife, made a light incision therewith, and with the greatest dexterity cut through the swelling in the twinkling of an eye, and perforated the skin. And when they looked to see come forth

from the wound either blood or putrefaction, lo and behold ! nothing of the sort happened — the only result of their operation being the transformation of their patient from a damsel into a young man. Though I am now telling you the sober truth in lieu of a fable, I cannot keep back my laughter. All the nuns fell straightway to weeping with grief, not indeed because of the wound which had been inflicted upon the damsel, or because of the distemper she had suffered, but rather on their own account, seeing that they would vastly have preferred that this event, which came to pass openly, should have happened in secret and without the knowledge of anyone except themselves. After what had occurred, for the sake of their good name they must needs send the damsel at once forth from the convent, whereas they would dearly have loved now to keep her amongst themselves. The physicians who were standing by could do nought else but laugh, and thus in a trice the

damsel, restored to health, became both man and woman. Now I, forsooth, have told you in place of something fictitious, something which is true — something, moreover, which I can speak of from the testimony of mine own eyes, forasmuch as I saw her after the event described above clad as a man, she partaking the while of the nature both of the one sex and of the other.

The Signora, when she saw that Molino's fable had come to a laughable end, and marked at the same time the rapid flight of the hours, addressed him, telling him that it behoved him to propound his enigma forthwith, according to the rule they had hitherto observed. Whereupon Molino, unwilling to keep the company any longer in suspense, spake thus :


From a mother born alone,
Other parent I have none.
Unwilling to my mother's side
I oft return, and there abide.
I am a strong and pungent wight,
And some in me find great delight ;

Others hate me for the bane
I bring to them, and loud complain.
Thus my destined part I play,
Working ever night and day ;
But children none, by fate's decree,
Will ever take their life from me.

Not one of the company could imagine what might be the meaning of Molino's enigma except Cateruzza, who had been chosen to tell the next fable. "Signor Antonio," said the damsel, "the obscurely-devised enigma you have set us to guess can mean nothing else than salt, which has no father, and has for its mother water. And to this mother the child will often return. Likewise, by its flavour it pleases some, and displeases others." Having thus given her solution of the riddle the damsel was silent for a short space ; but, remarking that no one else spake a word, she opened her pretty lips and thus began.

THE TENTH FABLE.

Cesare, a Neapolitan, after a long course of study at Bologna, takes his degree as doctor, and having returned to his home, files for reference all the judgments he has heard, in order the better to give his own decisions.

 HERE are three things, gracious ladies, which may be said to lay waste the world and to turn everything upside down.

These three are money, hatred, and favouritism, and the truth of this saying you will readily understand if you will give a kindly hearing to the fable I am about to tell you.

Lodovico Mota (as indeed you may have heard before) was a far-seeing and wise man, and one of the foremost citizens of Naples, and, being unmarried, he took to wife the daughter of Alessandro di Alessandri, who likewise dwelt in the city, and by her he had an only son,

to whom he gave the name of Cesare. When the child was old enough to receive instruction his father put him under the charge of a teacher to learn the rudiments of letters, and next sent him to Bologna to study the civil and the canon law. Here he abode some long time, getting however very little profit from his sojourn, although his father, who was keenly set on making his son a learned man, bought for him all the books of the jurisconsults of the canon law, and the works of all the learned men who had ever written on the one and on the other faculty, deeming that his son would be able to outstrip all the other pleaders of Naples, and nurturing the belief that he would, on this account, be in touch with the best clients and concerned in all the important cases before the courts. But Cesare, though he was a youth who had studied much, was wanting in the essential groundwork of legal science, and bare of all knowledge of letters; consequently he understood

not the things he read, and such facts as he had got by heart he would mouth out with great show of impudence, in preposterous fashion, and without any due ordering. So he would let one argument of his contradict another, thus showing his ignorance; forasmuch as he would constantly be wrangling with his mates, taking the truth for falsehood and falsehood for the truth. And like an inflated windbag he would go into the schools with his ears closed, and there build castles in the air. Because ignorant people are never weary of repeating the saying that it is an unseemly and disgraceful thing on the part of those who are possessed of great riches to spend their time in study; so Cesare, who in sooth was well-to-do, got little or no profit from prosecuting the study of the civil and canon law.

On this account, being willing and ready to let his own ignorance come into competition with the learning of those others who had not wasted their oil and

their time, but had studied long and diligently, he resolved with arrant presumption to offer himself for advancement to the grade of doctor. Wherefore, having presented himself before the senate with this purpose in his mind, and having taken up all the points of dispute which were proposed, he was set to show his acquirements publicly in the presence of a crowd of people. He began to exhibit black for white, and green for black, thinking that, as he was blind himself, all the others around must be blind likewise ; nevertheless, either by good fortune, or by the power of money, or by favouritism and friendship, his claim was allowed, and he was made a doctor. Afterwards, accompanied by a vast crowd of persons of quality, he made a progress through the city to the music of pipes and trumpets, and returned to his house clad in robes of silk and purple, so that one would have taken him for an ambassador rather than for a doctor of laws.

On a certain day this worthy master, dressed in his purple robe and velvet stole, prepared certain strips of paper and strung them together after the fashion of a notary's file, and then placed them altogether in a vase. While he was thus engaged, his father by chance came to him and asked him what he was minded to do with the papers he was preparing. Whereupon Cesare thus made reply: 'It is written, my father, in the books of the civil law that all decisions ought to be looked upon as belonging to the category of fortuitous chances.¹ Now I, who have studied the inmost spirit, and not merely the letter of the law, have made up these files at hazard, upon which I have noted down divers decisions, which, with God's good will, I will deliver without any trouble to myself to the litigants before me when by your aid and patronage I shall sit as a judge in the high court. Does

¹ Orig., *che le sententie si deono connumerare tra i casi fortuiti.*

it not seem to you, O my father! that I have in very subtle wise investigated and solved this question?' The father, when he listened to these words, was as a man half dead with grief, and having turned his back upon his useless lout of a son, left him in his ignorance to do the best he might.

Cateruzza's diverting story was received by the honourable company with the utmost pleasure, and after they had spent some minutes over discussing the same, the Signora directed her to let follow her enigma, and she, without waiting for further command, gave it in the following words:

I trust I may not you offend
In asking you, my worthy friend,
Whether a certain thing you have
Which lately in your charge I gave,
Which straight you took and folded tight
Between your left leg and your right.
This I must know and know straightway,
For much I grieve when 'tis away.
Good friend, your wrath I understand.
Fear not, for you shall hold in hand

This thing which lies upon my thigh,
Sways up and down, now low, now high,
And galls me sore, and hangs behind ·
So take it when you are inclined.

When Cateruzza had finished, the listeners looked one at the other, hardly knowing what to say. Whereupon she, perceiving that not one of them understood the meaning of the riddle she had propounded, spake thus: "Ladies and gentlemen, stand no longer in suspense, for I will straightway tell you the meaning of my enigma, although I find myself scarcely equal to the task. There was once a young man who lent to his friend his horse to ride out to his country house, which horse the friend sold. As the latter was on his way back, he was espied by the young man, who asked him what had become of the horse, and finding no sign of it, was greatly perturbed in mind. Whereupon his friend bade him take comfort, forasmuch as he had the money for which he had sold the horse safe in his purse, which galled

him somewhat by hanging down behind him." After Cateruzza with her subtle wit had thus revealed the meaning of her enigma, the Signora turned her glance towards the Trevisan, and in modest wise made a sign to him that he should forthwith let follow a story in due order. And he, without any wilful demur, began to speak in the following terms.

THE ELEVENTH FABLE.

A poor novice sets out from Cologne to travel to Ferrara, and having approached that city at nightfall, takes shelter by stealth in a certain place, where a terrifying adventure befalls him.



FEAR is sometimes begotten, most lovesome ladies, from too great confidence, and sometimes from the pusillanimity of our nature, which by rights ought to fear only those things which have real power in themselves to work evil to others, and to ignore all those which

have nothing terrible about them. I wish, dear ladies, to relate to you an adventure—a real one, and nought of jest therein—which happened in this our day to a certain poor novice and brought to him no little misfortune. He, having set forth from Cologne to journey to Ferrara, passed by the abbey and by the high ground above the swamps of Rovigo, and by the time he had reached the confines of the Duke of Ferrara's territory night had fallen. And although the moon was shining brightly, nevertheless the solitude and the strangeness of everything around him worked very powerfully upon the poor fellow's fears—he was indeed little more than a youth—and he was, moreover, much adread lest he should meet his death at the hands of malefactors or by wild beasts. As the poor wight wandered along, not knowing whither he should betake himself, and sensible that he had not a coin of any sort in his pocket, he saw before him a farmyard, somewhat

removed from the other buildings of the homestead, and having made his way into this without being seen or heard by anyone, he climbed up into a strawloft by a ladder which was placed conveniently against a wall, and, when he had ascended thither, he bestowed himself to rest for the night as best he could.

But scarcely had he settled himself to sleep when there climbed also into the loft a brisk young man, carrying a sword in his right hand and a shield on his left arm. The newcomer began to whistle softly, and the poor monk in the straw, hearing this, thought he was discovered, and every hair on his head stood upright with terror, and, crouching down still deeper in the straw, he lay as still as a mouse. Now the armed newcomer, who was indeed a neighboring curate, was inflamed with love for the wife of the owner of the adjacent house. The novice waited for a little space in keen anxiety, and then there issued from the house near a lady in her night-dress,

plump and very fair, and she also made her way into the loft. Directly the priest saw her he threw aside his sword and shield, and ran to embrace her and kissed her, and she on her part was not slow to return his endearments, and what followed I dare say you can guess.

As soon as the novice up in the straw perceived what was going on, his courage returned, for he now knew that the priest had not come there to do him any hurt, but to take pleasure with the frolicsome dame. Wherefore, being seized by curiosity and no longer afraid, he stretched his head out of the straw the better to observe how the lovers were occupying themselves, but leaning over too far forward he lost his balance, and there being nothing but straw to support him, he fell down right on the top of the lady and the priest, and gave his leg no little hurt by this accident.

The two lovers, being very ardently intent on the object for which they had foregathered, and still straining to pluck





The Novice's Terrifying Adventure

Night the Thirteenth

ELEVENTH FABLE





the ripe fruit of their desire, as soon as they espied the cloak and the head-gear of the black brother were mightily confounded at what they saw, and deemed that it must be some horrid night-walking ghost. Wherefore they both took to flight, trembling and filled with fear, and leaving behind the sword and the shield. The novice, with his broken shin and likewise much terrified, slunk away as best he could into a corner of the loft, and having burrowed a large hole in the heap of straw, hid himself therein. The priest, who began to be in some fear of discovery, seeing that his sword and shield were well known, returned to the loft, and espying nothing more of the ghost, he picked up his weapons, and, albeit somewhat disturbed in spirit, returned to his own house.

When the morrow was come, the priest, having a mind to say the mass in good time in order that he might despatch certain private affairs of his own, stationed himself at the church

door and waited for his clerk, who was to come and help him with the office. As he stood there watching, who should come up but the poor novice, who, for fear lest he should be discovered in his lodgings and roughly handled, had got up before day. Now just as he came up to the church the priest asked him whither he was bound, whereupon he answered, 'I am going to Ferrara.' When the priest further inquired of him whether he was in any haste, he replied that he was not, and that it would serve his purpose very well if he were to reach Ferrara by nightfall. Then the priest asked the young monk whether he would be willing to stop and help to say the mass, and to this proposition the novice readily assented.

The priest, noting that the young monk had on a black robe, and that his hood and gown had divers straws hanging thereto, at once began to suspect that he might be talking to last night's

ghost, wherefore he said, 'My brother, where did you sleep last night?' To this the novice made answer, I slept mightily ill upon a straw stack not far from here, where about midnight I fell down and nigh broke my leg.' The priest, when he heard these words, was yet more confirmed in his belief that the novice was the man he suspected him to be, and he did not suffer him to go his way until he had fully disclosed to him the whole matter as it stood. And after the mass had been said the novice dined with the priest, and then went his way with his broken shin. But before he departed the host besought him that, on his journey back, he would pay another visit to the place, forasmuch as he was taken with the fancy that the lady herself should hear the whole story from the lips of the young monk. But he did not return, for, having been warned in a dream, he travelled back to his monastery by a different road.

As soon as the fable told by the Trevisan had come to an end and had been duly praised, he, without allowing any further lapse of time, made a beginning of his enigma in the following words :

Its length and breadth shall I disclose ?
Upon my lap it nestles close ;
I stroke it and I hold it tight.
To all around it gives delight.
Fair ladies, is it strange to you
It does its work correct and true ?
Though rapture sweet within may dwell,
'Tis passive till it knows me well.


“ I would never wish, most gracious ladies, to suffer reproof from you on the score of impropriety for having brought forward in such an assembly as this anything which might seem offensive to your chaste hearing. But in truth this enigma of mine is in no way allied to aught that is unseemly, but on the other hand to something which delights you much and from which you take no small pleasure. My enigma,

in sooth, is meant to describe the lute, the handle of which is somewhat more than a span in width, while its body is wont to rest in the lap of the person who plays it, thus giving delight to all who listen."

Everyone praised loudly the subtle enigma propounded by the Trevisan, and especially the Signora, who listened to it with great pleasure. As soon as all were once more silent, the Signora gave the word to Isabella to let follow her fable, and she, who was neither deaf nor mute, spake in the following wise.

THE TWELFTH FABLE.

Guglielmo, King of Bertagna, being grievously afflicted by a certain malady, causes to be summoned all the physicians for the restoring and preservation of his health. One Maestro Gotfreddo, a doctor and a very poor man, gives him three maxims, by which he rules his life and recovers his health.

N sooth those may well account themselves born under a lucky star, or even somewhat more than mortal, whose judgment naturally leads them to avoid with success all such things as are noxious, and to seek such things as may be most beneficial and profitable to them. But men of this sort, who are willing to observe certain rules in their manner of life, have in all times been hard to find, and nowadays there are very few of them left. Nevertheless, it happened entirely otherwise in the case of a certain king, who, having received from a

physician three rules for the preservation of his health, regulated his life strictly thereby.

I think, nay, I am sure, gracious ladies, that you have never heard tell of the story of Guglielmo, King of Bertagna, who in his day had no peer either in prowess or in courtesy, and who was, as long as he lived, the special favourite of fortune. In a certain year it happened that this king fell grievously sick, but, being young and full of courage, he gave little thought to the malady; but, as his illness continued and grew worse from day to day, things came to such a pass that all hope of preserving his life was gone. On this account the king gave orders that all the physicians of the city should come together into his presence, and then and there freely give their opinions concerning his state. As soon as the will of the king had been made known, every one of the medical faculty, of whatever grade or condition he might be, repaired to the royal palace

and presented himself before the king. Amongst this crowd of physicians there was one named Maestro Gotfredo, a man of seemly life and of adequate learning, but very poor, and meanly clad, and shod still worse. And, forasmuch as he was so badly accoutred, he had not confidence enough to put himself forward in an assembly of so many learned and illustrious men, but, through very shame, stationed himself behind the door of the king's chamber, where he could hardly be seen, and there he stood concealed, listening the while to all the opinions pronounced by the careful and learned physicans within.

As soon as all the physicians had come into the presence of the king, he thus addressed them : ' Most worthy and excellent doctors, I have summoned you all here into my presence for no other reason than to learn of you what may be the cause of the grave distemper which now assails me, and to beg of you that you will exercise all your skill and

diligence in curing the same, giving me such remedies as my condition may require, and thus restoring me to my former health. And as soon as you shall have made me well again, you shall give me whatever rules may seem to you the most fitting in my case for the preservation of my health for the future.' To this the physicians made answer: 'Sacred majesty, to confer the boon of health is beyond our power. Power such as this lies only in the hands of Him who rules all things with His nod. Nevertheless, we will endeavour, as far as within us lies, to supply you with every remedy which may possibly serve for the restoration of your health, and for the conservation of the same when you shall have recovered it.'

And hereupon the learned physicians began to dispute amongst themselves as to the source of the king's illness, and as to the remedies which they proposed to prescribe therefor, each one of them (as is the custom of the faculty) giving

out his own opinion, citing the authority of Galen, of Hippocrates, of Avicenna, of Æsculapius, and of the other great doctors. The king, as soon as their opinions had been clearly set before him, happened to turn his eyes towards the door of the chamber, and caught sight of some sort of shadowy form which was there manifest. Whereupon he demanded of them whether there remained any one of their number who had not yet spoken. They answered him that there was none. But the king, who was fully assured that he had seen someone, said: 'If I am not a blind man, it is plain to me that there is something, I know not what, behind that door. Now what may this be?' To the king's question one of the learned doctors made answer: '*Est homo quidam,*' making mock the while, and playing jests upon the poor physician, never considering that it often comes to pass that art is made the sport of art.¹ Hereupon the

¹ Orig., *che l'arte dall' arte e schernita.*

king made Gotfreddo understand that he was to come into his presence, and he perceived that this man, ill clad as he was, was in truth a physician. He came forward, and, trembling with fear, bent himself down in humble reverence, and made a courteous obeisance to the king, who, after having first bidden him be seated with all due honour, asked him what might be his name. To this he made answer: 'Sacred majesty, my name is Gotfreddo.' Then said the king 'Maestro Gotfreddo, you must needs have got sufficient intelligence of my condition from listening to the wrangling which these right worshipful doctors have made since they have come into my chamber, wherefore there is no necessity that the whole story should be told over again. Now tell me what you have to say concerning my illness.' 'Sacred majesty,' answered Gotfreddo, 'although I may, with due desert, style myself the meanest, the least learned, and the poorest speaker in all this gathering of venerable

masters, by reason of my penury and of the low esteem in which I am held, nevertheless, in order to show myself obedient to the commands of your highness, I will labour with all the strength which in me lies to make clear to you the origin of your distemper, and to give to you a certain regimen and rule of life, by following which you will be able to ensure sound health for the future. You must know, gracious sire, that this infirmity of yours is in no sense a mortal one, seeing that it springs not from any fundamental element of your nature, but from some violent and unseen accident. This ailment, indeed, in like manner as it came suddenly upon you, shall suddenly dissipate itself. In order that you may regain your former health, I ask no harder task of you than that you should be careful in your diet, taking at the same time a little of the flower of cassia for the cooling of your blood. If you will do this, in eight days you will be sound and well again. And when your health shall have

been restored to you, you must, if you desire to keep yourself well for any long time, carefully observe these three precepts. The first is, that your head be always dry. The second is, that you keep your feet warm. The third is, that in taking your food you follow the example of the beasts of the field. If you will put these precepts of mine into execution, you will long keep out of harm's way, and will be a robust and healthy man.'

The physicians standing round, as soon as they heard the good advice given by Maestro Gotfredo to the king concerning his rule of life, began to laugh so long and loud that they were like to burst their chaps with laughter, and, turning towards the king, they cried: 'These, in sooth, are the canons; these are the rules of Maestro Gotfredo; here we see the fruit of his studies! Fine remedies, indeed, are these — fine provision to have made for such an illustrious king!' and in this fashion they went

on, making mock of him. The king, when he heard the loud laughter which arose from the assembled physicians, gave command straightway that every one should be silent and should give over laughing, and furthermore directed Maestro Gotfredo to bring forth his reasons in favour of the course he had recommended. 'My lord and king,' said Gotfredo, 'these my fathers in learning, men highly to be honoured, and greatly skilled in the art of medicine, have shown themselves not a little amazed anent the rule I have laid down for the governance of your health, but if they would bring their sound and sober judgment to the consideration of those causes from which spring the diseases of men, perchance they would not laugh so heartily, but would be disposed to listen with attention to the words of one who maybe (with all respect be it spoken) is both wiser and more skilled than they themselves. Be not astonished, sacred majesty, at this proposition

of mine, but set it down as a certain truth that all the infirmities with which men are afflicted derive their origin either from an excess of bodily heat, or from taking cold, or from a superfluity of noxious humours. Wherefore, as soon as ever a man finds himself in a sweat through weariness or through the great heat, he ought forthwith to wipe himself dry in order that the moisture which has come out of his body may not return thereinto and so produce a distemper. Again, a man ought to keep his feet warm to prevent the damps and chills which the earth gives forth from ascending to his stomach, and from his stomach to his head, thus to generate pains in the head, an unwholesome habit of the stomach, and innumerable other ills. What I meant by the example of the beasts of the field, is that man ought to eat only such food as is fitted for his habit of body, as do the animals which have no reason, nourishing themselves with diet suitable to their nature. Let

us now take the case of the ox or of the horse. If you were to offer to either of these a capon, or a pheasant, or a partridge, or a bit of fine fat veal, or any other meat, he assuredly would not eat thereof, seeing that food of this sort is not what his nature requires. But if you should place before him hay or any other provender, he would at once fall to eating, because the food is what is fitting for him. Again, give the capon, or the pheasant, or the meat, to a dog, or even to a cat, and it will straightway devour it, because it is appropriate food. And on the contrary, these beasts will not touch the hay or the corn, because it is not the diet they require, but unfitted for their nature. Therefore I beg you, O my lord! to give up eating all such food as is not suited to your habit of body, and to take only the things which agree with your temperament. If you will do as I tell you, you will enjoy a long and healthy life.'

The advice which Gotfredde gave

greatly pleased the king, who, putting full faith therein, kept to it closely, and, having dismissed the other physicians, retained Maestro Gotfredo about his person, holding him in high reverence on account of his virtue and worth. Thus, from being very poor, Gotfredo became a rich man, a reward he well merited, and having been appointed sole guardian of the king's health, he lived happily ever after.

Isabella, whose fable had greatly delighted the whole assembly, here paused, having brought her story-telling to an end, but almost immediately went on with her enigma in these words:

Marvel not, O lady fair !
At what I now to you declare ;
For truth itself is not more true,
Though it may worthless seem to you.
One time, when pressed by danger fell,
A friend I found who served me well ;
But had I not, with force amain,
Sent him into his place again,
I should have met my death straightway,
And vanished from this world away.

For some reason the meaning of this enigma appeared to the ladies to be somewhat immodest, but in truth it was nothing of the sort, because under the husk there lay another sense different altogether from the one which it bore, as they imagined, on the surface. It was as follows: a youth being chased by catchpoles, took to flight, and, as he was running, he saw standing open the door of a house; whereupon another man, to save him, thrust him into this house and closed the door thereof, and shot the bolt into its place, that is, into the hole it fitted. If he had not acted thus the youth would have been undone, because he would have had to go to prison.

Scarcely had Isabella brought to an end the exposition of her enigma, when Vicenza, without waiting for any command from the Signora, took up her turn with the following discourse.

THE THIRTEENTH FABLE.

Pietro Rizzato, a spendthrift, is reduced to poverty. Then, having found a treasure, becomes a miser.



PRODIGALITY is a vice which brings a man to a worse end even than avarice, forasmuch as the spendthrift devours both his own substance and that of other men as well, and, when once brought to want, is ill looked upon by all; nay rather, all people are wont to fly from him as from one bereft of reason, and an outlaw, and to make mock of him. So indeed it happened in the case of a certain Pietro Rizzato, who, on account of his reckless spending, was brought to the greatest misery. Then, having by chance discovered a treasure, he became a rich man and a niggard to boot.

I must tell you, then, that in Padua, a city very famous for its learning, there

dwelt in times past one Pietro Rizzato, a courteous gentleman, exceedingly comely in person, and furnished with wealth in more abundant measure than any other citizen, but at the same time a spendthrift, forasmuch as he would give continually to friends of his now this thing and now that, in such wise as appeared to him to square with the condition of each of them. Wherefore, on account of this over-lavish habit of his, he had a great crowd always following on his traces, and guests were never wanting at his table, which was every day abundantly set with the most delicate and precious viands. This man, among his other acts of folly, wrought two which seem worthy of special remark; one of which happened on a certain day when he was going, in the company of some other gentlemen of Padua, to Venice by the Brenta. Remarking that each one of his companions was seeking diversion, this one in making music and that one in some other fashion, he, in

order not to appear the only one unoccupied amongst them, set himself, as the saying is, to make ducks and drakes of pieces of money, by casting them one by one into the stream. The other, which in sooth was of a graver nature, was as follows: one day, when he was staying at his country house, it happened that a troop of young men came to pay their respects to him, and he, as soon as he caught sight of them, set fire to the houses of all his workpeople in order to show due honour to his guests.

For this reason it soon came to pass that Pietro, consumed with the desire to content his appetites in every possible manner, and living dissolutely without any kind of restraint, found himself at the end of his wealth, and at the same time free of the company of all those friends who had heretofore paid court to him. He, in the past, when he was in the full enjoyment of his wealth, had given sustenance to a great tribe of hungry familiars, but now that he himself

was both hungry and thirsty, he could find not a single one ready to give him to eat or to drink. He had clothed the naked, now there was none willing to cover his own nakedness; he had cared for those who were sick, now he called in vain for someone to relieve his infirmities; he had given loving entertainment to all, honouring them as best he could, now he met nothing but frowning looks from his friends, who fled from him as from some contagious pestilence. And although the poor wight was thus brought to such a cruel and bitter pass of poverty, being naked and ailing, and vexed, moreover, with a grievous dysentery, he let pass in patience his miserable and unhappy life, thanking God always for having given him an understanding mind.

It happened one day that the wretched man, all dirty, and afflicted with the itch as well, made his way into a certain ruined building, not for the sake of pleasure, but simply to ease nature. While he was there his eyes fell upon a

spot in the wall, fallen to decay through age, and in a large crack thereof he beheld the shining of gold. Having broken down the wall, he came upon a great vase of baked earth, filled with fine golden ducats, which he bore back secretly to his house, and began to spend for his needs, not lavishly, as heretofore, but in moderate wise according to his requirements. His friends and close companions, who had courted him so assiduously at the time when he had lived a jovial life, as soon as they saw that he was once more a man of substance forthwith imagined that they would find him the same spendthrift as hitherto. Thus, having sought his presence, they began to wheedle and to flatter him, deeming that they would now be able again to live at another's charges. But the matter came not to the issue they desired, forasmuch as they found him in no sense a fool and a spendthrift, and one disposed to lavish his goods sottishly and to be always feasting; they discovered

rather that he had become prudent and careful, and even avaricious. When these companions of his inquired of him by what means he had acquired so much money, he made answer to them that, if any of them wanted to get wealth, they must first suffer as grievously from dysentery as he himself had suffered, meaning by this speech that, before he had found his treasure, he had been forced to shed his blood.¹ Wherefore the aforesaid friends and companions, as soon as they saw that it would be no easy matter to draw any further profit for themselves from Pietro, went their way.

This fable gave great pleasure to all the company, for the reason that it showed openly that friends ought to prove their worth, not when the world goes well with us, but when it goes ill, and that extremes of all sorts are evil. As soon as all were once more silent, the Signora commanded Vicenza to let fol-

¹ Orig., *che prima haveva sparso 'l sangue, che trovato havesse li danari.*

low her enigma, and the maiden had no sooner heard the words of the Signora than she spoke somewhat saucily as follows :

Now, learned sir, I prithee say,
What is it that is born to-day,
Again to-morrow born ? When dead,
Beneath the earth it hides its head ;
But there not fated to remain.
Short is its day of toil and pain ;
Early and guiltless oft it dies ;
No stain of sin upon it lies ;
And old or young, or large or small,
We find them in our dishes all.

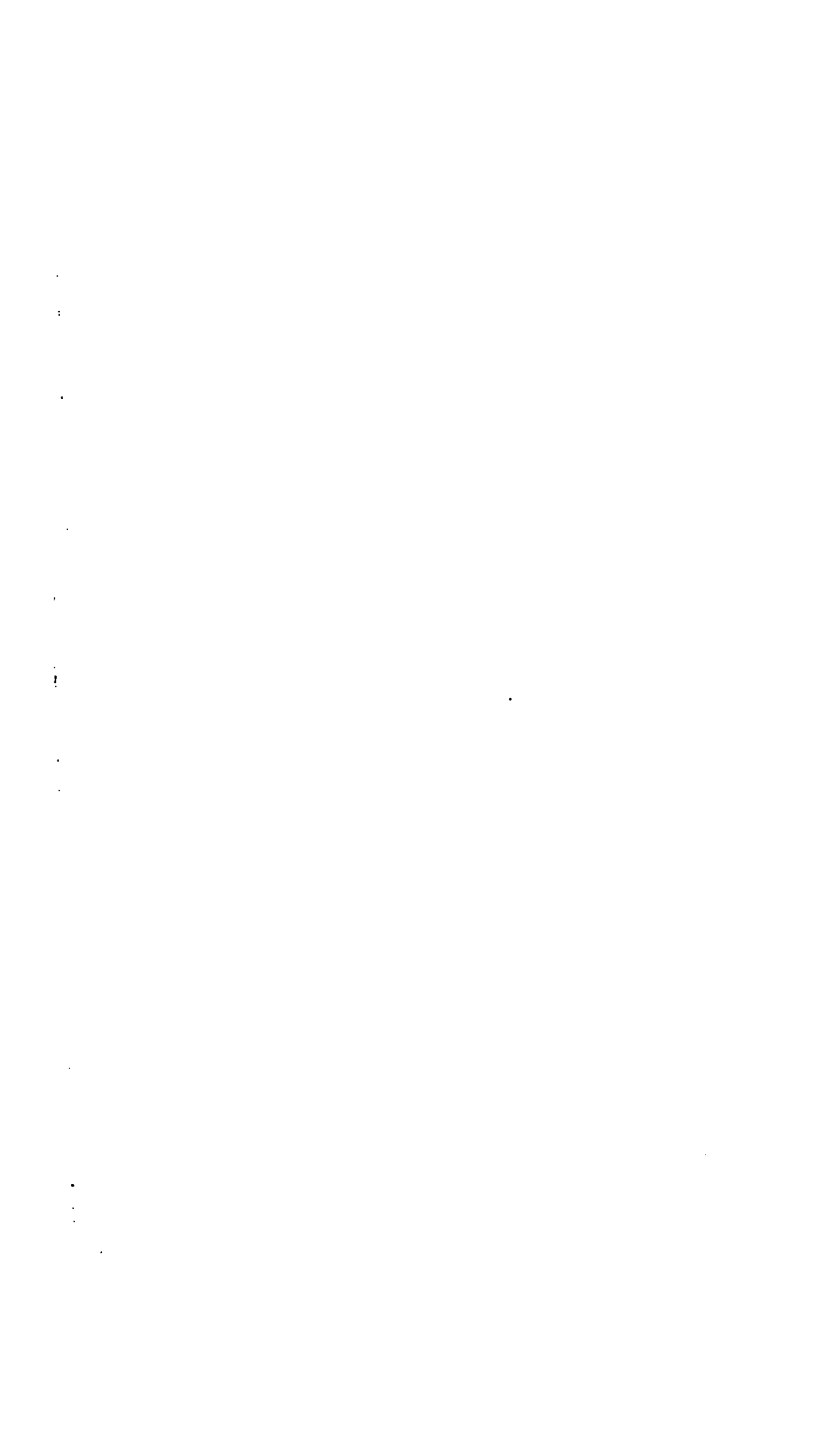
The whole company judged the enigma thus propounded to be a very difficult one, whereupon Vicenza, like the discreet damsel she was, explained its meaning in the following wise : " This twice born thing is the egg, from which there is born without any gossip the chick, which has but a short span of life, and often dies before it has committed any offence, that is to say, before it has ever known the pleasure of its mate.

And fowls, whether they be small or big, are good for our use." This fair interpretation of a very difficult riddle was a cause of wonder to all the grateful company, and there was not one who withheld high commendation of the same.

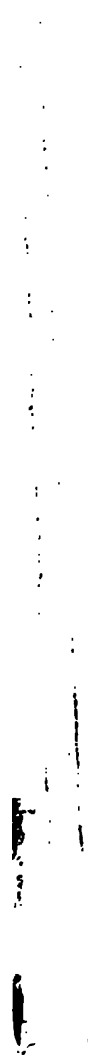
And now, because the reddening dawn began to appear, and because the time of carnival had come to an end and the first day of Lent had begun, the Signora, turning towards the honourable company with her face lighted up with pleasure, spake thus: "Know well, all you illustrious and honourable gentlemen, and you also, ladies, most lovesome and highly honoured, that we are now come to the first day of Lent. On this account it seems to me right that we should at once put aside the solace of our delightful conversation, our amorous dances, and sweet music and mirthful fables." The gentlemen, and the ladies as well, who desired nothing more than what was thus proposed, assented with

words of high commendation to the expressed wish of the Signora; so, without lighting the torches — because, indeed, it was now broad daylight — the Signora gave command that they should all betake themselves to rest, and that no one should again repair to the place of meeting except at her request. Whereupon the gentlemen, having been dismissed by the gracious Signora with such exceeding and eminent modesty (on account of the ending of the carnival, and for no other reason), showed themselves obedient to her command, as had ever been their wont in the days that had elapsed. They all bowed reverently, with every gesture of respect they had been accustomed to use, and, having left the Signora and the ladies to repose themselves, they made their way to their homes.

The End of the Thirteenth and Last Night.



Terminal Essay.





Terminal Essay.

THE name of Giovanni Francesco Straparola has been handed down to later ages as the author of the "Piacevoli Notti" (Facetious Nights), and on no other account, for the reason that he is one of those fortunate men of letters concerning whom next to nothing is known. He writes himself down as "da Caravaggio;" so it may be reasonably assumed that he first saw the light in that town, but no investigator has yet succeeded in indicating the year of his birth, or in bringing to light any circumstances of his life, other than certain facts connected with the authorship and publication of his works. The ground has been closely searched more than once, and in every case the seek-

ers have come back compelled to admit that they have no story to tell or new fact to add to the scanty stock which has been already garnered. Straparola as a personage still remains the shadow he was when La Monnoie summed up the little that was known about him in the preface to the edition, published in 1725, of the French translation of the "Notti."

He was doubtless baptized by the Christian names given above, but it is scarcely probable that Straparola can ever have been the surname or style of any family in Caravaggio or elsewhere. More likely than not it is an instance of the Italian predilection for nicknaming, — a coined word designed to exhibit and perhaps to hold up to ridicule his undue loquacity ; just as the familiar names of Masaccio, and Ghirlandaio, and Guercino, were tacked on to their illustrious wearers on account of some personal peculiarity or former calling. Caravaggio is a small town lying near

to Crema, and about half way between Cremona and Bergamo. It enjoyed in the Middle Ages some fame as a place of pilgrimage on account of a spring of healing water which gushed forth on a certain occasion when the Virgin Mary manifested herself. Polidoro Caldara and Michael Angelo Caravaggio were amongst its famous men, and of these it keeps the memory, but Straparola is entirely forgotten. Fontanini, in the "*Biblioteca dell' eloquenza Italiana*," does not name him at all. Quadrio, "*Storia e ragione d'ogni poesia*," mentions him as the author of the "*Piacevoli Notti*," and remarks on his borrowings from Morlini. Tiraboschi, in the index to the "*Storia della letteratura Italiana*," does not even give his name, and Crescimbeni¹ concerns himself only with the enigmas which are to be found at the end of the fables. It is indeed a strange freak of chance that such complete oblivion should have fallen over the indi-

¹ "*Istoria della volgar poesia*" (Ven. 1731).

viduality of a writer so widely read and appreciated.

The first edition of the first part of the "*Piacevoli Notti*" was published at Venice in 1550, and of the second part in 1553. It would appear that the author must have been alive in 1557, because, at the end of the second part of the edition of that year,¹ there is a paragraph setting forth the fact that the work was printed and issued "*ad istanza dell' autore.*" Some time before 1553 he seems to have been stung sharply on account of some charges of plagiarism which were brought against him by certain detractors, for in all the un-mutilated editions of the "*Notti*" published after that date there is to be found a short introduction to the second part, in which he somewhat acrimoniously throws back these accusations, and calls upon all "*gratiose et amorevole donne*" to accept his explanations thereof, ad-

¹ In 1556 the two parts were first issued bearing the same date, but with a different title-page.

mitting at the same time that these stories are not his own, but a faithful transcript of what he heard told by the ten damsels in their pleasant assembly. La Monnoie, in his preface to the French translation (ed. 1726), maintains that this juggling with words can only be held to be an excuse on his part for having borrowed the subject-matter for his fables and worked it into shape after his own taste. "Il declare qu'il ne se les est jamais attribuées, et se contente du mérite de les avoir fidèlement rapportées d'après les dix damoiselles. Cela, comme tout bon entendeur le comprend, ne signifie autre chose sinon qu'il avoit tiré d'ailleurs la matière de ces Fables, mais qu'il leur avoit donné la forme."

This contention of La Monnoie seems reasonable enough, but Grimm, in the notes to "*Kinder und Hausmärchen*," has fallen into the strange error of treating Straparola's apology as something grave and seriously meant, and in the

same sentence improves on his mistake by asserting that Straparola took all the fairy tales from the mouths of the ten ladies. "Von jenem Schmutz sind die Märchen¹ ziemlich frei, wie sie ohnehin den besten Theil des ganzen Werkes ausmachen. Straparola hat sie, wie es in der Vorrede zum zweiten Bande (vor der sechsten Nacht) heisst, aus dem Munde zehn junger Fräulein aufgenommen und ausdrücklich erklärt, dass sie nicht sein Eigenthum seien."

The most reasonable explanation of this mistake lies in the assumption that Grimm never saw the introduction to the second part at all. Indeed, the fact that he often uses French spelling of the proper names suggests that he may have worked from the French translation. Straparola makes no distinction between fairy tales and others. His words are, "che le piacevoli favole da me scritte,

¹ To add to the confusion, the English translator of Grimm gives "stories" as the equivalent for "Märchen."

et in questo, et nell' altro volumetto raccolte non siano mie, ma da questo, et quello ladronesamente rubbate. Io a dir il vero, il confesso, che non sono mie, e se altrimenti dicessi, me ne mentirei, ma ben holle fedelmente scritte secondo il modo che furono da dieci damigelle nel concistorio raccontate."

Besides the "Notti" only one other work of Straparola's is known to exist—a collection of sonnets and other poems published at Venice in 1508, and (according to a citation of Zanetti in the "Novelliero Italiano," t. iii., p. xv., Ven. 1754, Bindoni) in 1515 as well.¹ A comparison of these dates will serve to show that, as he had already brought out a volume in the first decade of the century, the "Piacevoli Notti" must

¹ M. Jannet in his preface to the "Facétieuses Nuits de Straparole" (Paris, 1857), says he has not been able to find a copy of this work in any library. There is one in the British Museum, under the title, "Opera nova da Zoan Francesco Streparola da Caravazo novamēte stampata Sonetti CXV., Strabotti XXXV., Epistole VII., Capitoli XII." (Ven. 1508, per Georgio de Ruschoni).

have been the work of his maturity or even of his old age. With this fact the brief catalogue of the known circumstances of his life comes to an end.

Judging from the rapidity with which the successive editions of the "*Notti*" were brought forth from the press after the first issue — sixteen appeared in the twenty years between 1550 and 1570 — we may with reason assume that it soon took hold of the public favour.¹ Its fame spread early into France, where in 1560 an edition of the first part, translated into French by Jean Louveau, appeared at Lyons, to be followed some thirteen years later by a translation of the second part by Pierre de la Rivey, who thus completed the book. He likewise revised and re-wrote certain portions of Louveau's translation, and in 1725 an edition was produced at Amsterdam, enriched by a preface by La Monnoie, and notes by Lainez. There are evidences

¹ The "*Decameron*" did not reach its sixteenth edition till fifty years after its first publication.

that a German translation of the "Notti" was in existence at the beginning of the seventeenth century, for in the introduction to Fischart's "Gargantua" (1608) there is an allusion to the tales of Straparola, brought in by way of an apology for the appearance of the work, the writer maintaining that, if the ears of the ladies are not offended by Boccaccio, Straparola, and other writers of a similar character, there is no reason why they should be offended by Rabelais. The author of the introduction to a fresh edition of the same work (1775) remarks that he knows the tales of Straparola from a later edition published in 1699. Of this translation no copy is known to exist.

In the "Palace of Pleasure" Painter has given only one of the fables, the second Fable¹ of the second Night; and in Roscoe's "Italian Novelists"

¹ In his introduction to the recent edition of Painter, Mr. Joseph Jacobs cites the presence of this fable as an argument that Painter must occasionally have translated directly from the Italian. There is no reason, however, why he should not have used Louveau's work.

another one appears, the fourth Fable of the tenth Night. At the end of the last century the first Fable of the first Night was printed separately in London under the title, "Novella cioe copia d'un Caso notabile intervenuto a un gran gentiluomo Genovese."¹ A translation of twenty-four of the fables, prefaced by a lengthy and verbose disquisition on the author, reputed to be from the pen of Mazzuchelli, appeared at Vienna in 1791;² but Brackelmann, in his "Inaugural Dissertation" (Gottingen, 1867), has an examination of the introduction above named, which goes far to prove

¹ It was published with seven other stories in a volume, "Novelle otto rarissime stampate a spese de Signor Giacomo conte de Clambrasil, J. Stanley, et Wogan Browne. Londra, Giacomo Edwards, 1790."

² Brackelmann says that it was a selection from the first six nights, while Grimm maintains that it contains the whole of these, and Grimm's English translator says that it "only contains six stories." In fact, it is made up chiefly of the contents of the first six nights, but in addition to these it contains fables from Nights VII., VIII., and XIII. It would appear that neither Dunlop nor Schmidt knew of the existence of this work.

that Mazzuchelli had little or nothing to do with it. In 1817 Dr. F. W. V. Schmidt published at Berlin a translation into German of eighteen fables selected from the "Notti," to which he gave the title "Die Märchen des Straparola." To his work Dr. Schmidt affixed copious notes, compiled with the greatest care and learning, thus opening to his successors a rich and valuable storehouse both of suggestion and of accumulated facts. It is almost certain that he must have worked from one of the many mutilated or expurgated editions of the book, for in the complete work there are several stories unnoticed by him which he would assuredly have included in his volume had he been aware of their existence.

Four of Straparola's fables are slightly altered versions of four of the stories in the "Thousand and One Nights,"¹ which, as it will scarcely be necessary

¹ Night IV., Fable I.; Night IV., Fable III.; Night V., Fable III., and Night XII., Fable III.

to remark, were not translated into any European language till Galland brought out his work at the beginning of the eighteenth century. One of these, the third Fable of the fourth Night, is substantially the same as the story of the Princess Parizade and her envious sisters, given in Galland's translation. To account for this close resemblance we may either assume that Galland may have looked at Straparola's fable, or that Straparola may have listened to it from the mouth of some wandering oriental or of some Venetian traveller recently come back from the East — the tale, as he heard it, having been faithfully taken from the same written page which Galland afterwards translated. Another one, the story of the Three Hunchbacks — the third Fable of the fifth Night — has less likeness to the original, and has been imitated by Gueulette in his "*Contes Tartares*." The treatment of the story of the Princess Parizade by Straparola furnishes an il-

illustration to prove that he was by no means deficient in literary skill and taste. He brings into due prominence the wicked midwife, who is *particeps criminis* with the queen-mother and the sisters in the attempted murder of the children, and who has on this account full and valid motive for acting as she did, seeing that interest and self-preservation as well would have prompted her to compass their destruction. On the other hand, in the Arabian tale it is hard to understand why the female fakir should have been led to persuade the princess to send her brothers off on their quest. Again, in the fable of Prince Guerrino¹ Straparola has displayed great ingenuity in weaving together a good story out of some half-dozen of the widely-known fairy motives, any one of which might well have been fashioned into a story by itself.

After reading the "Facetious Nights" through one can hardly fail to be struck

¹ Night V., Fable I.

by the amazing variety of the themes therein handled. Besides the fairy tales — *many of them classic* — to which allusion has already been made, there is *the world-famous story* of "Puss in Boots,"¹ an original product of Straparola's brain. There are others which may rather be classed as romances of chivalry, in the elaboration of which a generous amount of magic and mystery is employed. The residue is made up of stories of intrigue and buffo tales of popular Italian life, some of which are fulsome in subject and broad in treatment, but with regard to the majority of these one is disposed to be lenient, inasmuch as the fun, though somewhat indelicate, is real fun. When the duped husband, a figure almost as inevitable in the Italian Novella as in the modern French novel, is brought forward, he is not always exhibited as the contemptible creature who seems to have sat for the part in the stories of the better known writers. Indeed, it

¹ Night XI., Fable I

sometimes happens that he turns the tables on his betrayers; and, although Straparola is laudably free from the vice of preaching, he now and then indulges in a brief homily by way of pointing out the fact that violators of the Decalogue generally come to a bad end, and that his own sympathies are all on the side of good manners. It is true that one misses in the "Notti" those delicious invocations of Boccaccio, commonly to be found at the end of the more piquant stories, in which he piously calls on Heaven to grant to himself and to all Christian men *bonnes fortunes* equal to those which he has just chronicled.

In the Proem to the work it is set forth how Ottaviano Maria Sforza, the bishop-elect of Lodi — the same probably who died in 1540, after a life full of vicissitude — together with his daughter Lucretia, is compelled by the stress of political events to quit Milan. The Signora Lucretia is described as the wife of Giovanni Francesco Gonzaga, cousin

of Federico, Marquis of Mantua, but as no mention of this prince is made it may be assumed that she was already a widow. Seeing that her husband died in 1523, an approximate date may be fixed for the "Piacevoli Notti," but historical accuracy in cases of this sort is not to be expected or desired. After divers wanderings the bishop-elect and his daughter find a pleasant refuge on the island of Murano, where they gather around them a company of *congenial spirits*, consisting of a group of *lovely and accomplished damsels, and divers cavaliers* of note. Chief amongst the latter is the learned Pietro Bembo, the renowned humanist and *the most distinguished man of letters* Venice ever produced. With him came his friend Gregorio Casali, who is described as "Casal Bolognese, a bishop, and likewise ambassador of the King of England." Both Gregorio Casali and his brother Battista were entrusted by Henry VIII. with the conduct of affairs of state

pending between him and the Pope, and the former certainly visited England more than once. The king showed him many signs of favour during his stay, and when in 1527 Casali found himself shut up in Rome by the beleaguering army of the Constable of Bourbon, he was allowed free exit on the ground of his ambassadorial rank. Bernardo Cappello, another friend of Bembo, is also of the company, and a certain Antonio Molino, *a poet of repute*, who subsequently tells a fable in the dialect of Bergamo — a feat which leads to a similar display of local knowledge on the part of Signor Benedetto Trivigiano, who discourses in Trevisan. It may be remarked, however, that by far the greater number of the fables are told by the ladies.

But the joyous company assembled in the palace at Murano find divers other forms of recreation beside story-telling. They dance and they sing ballads, which are for the most part in

praise of the gracious Signora Lucretia, but *the chief byplay of the entertainment* consists in the setting and solving of riddles. As soon as a fable is brought to an end the narrator is always called upon by the Signora to complete the task by propounding an enigma. This is then duly set forth in puzzling verses, put together as a rule in terms obscure enough to baffle solution, often entirely senseless, and now and again of a character fulsome enough to call down upon the propounder the Signora's rebuke on account of the seeming impropriety of the subject. A certain number of these enigmas are broad examples of the *double entendre*. The first reading of them makes one agree with the Signora, but when the graceful and modest damsel, who may have been the author, proceeds to give the true explanation of her riddle she never fails to demonstrate clearly to the gentle company that her enigma, from beginning to end, is entirely free from all that is unseemly. In "French

and English " Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton tells a story illustrating the late survival of this sort of witticism in France. In the early days of Louis Philippe, on one occasion when the court was at Eu, the mayor of the town and certain other local notables were bidden to *déjeuner* at the chateau, and after banquet the mayor, in accordance with an old French fashion, asked leave to sing a song of his own making. This composition had two meanings, one lying on the surface and perfectly innocent, and the other, slightly veiled, which, though not immoral, was prodigiously indecent. When the true nature of the song was realized, there was for a second or two silence and confusion amongst the company; but at last, by good luck, someone laughed. The dangerous point was safely rounded, and the mayor brought his song to an end amidst loud applause.

When he published his translation into French of the second part of the

"Notti," Pierre de la Rivey made alterations in almost all the enigmas therein contained, and re-wrote many of those which had already been translated by Louveau, but in neither case did his work tend to improve them.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, there will be found in the "Notti" a smaller proportion of stories objectionable to modern canons of taste than in any of the better known collections of Italian *novelle*. The judgments which have been dealt out to Straparola on the score of ribaldry by Landau ("Beiträge," p. 130), by the writer of the article in the "Biographie Universelle," and by Grimm in his notes to "Kinder und Hausmärchen," seem to be unduly severe. In certain places he is no doubt somewhat broad, but the number of these fables is not large. If one were to take the trouble to compare the rendering given by Basile in the "Pentamerone," of stories told also by Straparola, with the rendering of the same in the

"Notti," the award for propriety of language would assuredly not always be given to the Neapolitan, who, it should be remembered, was writing a book for young children. In few of the collections of a similar character is there to be found so genuine a vein of comedy, and for the sake of this one may perhaps be permitted to beg indulgence for occasional lapses — lapses which are assuredly fewer in number and probably not more lax in character than those of novelists of greater fame. Straparola turns naturally towards *the cheerful side of things*, the lives of the men and women he deals with seem to be less oppressed with the *tedium vitæ* than are the creatures of the Florentine and Siennese and Neapolitan novel-writers,¹ and the reason of this is not far to seek. Life in Venice, when once the political constitution was firmly and finally fixed on an oligarchic basis, was more stable, more secure, more luxurious than in any of

¹ Cf. Foreword, Vol. I., XI.

the other ruling cities of Italy. Social and political convulsion of the sort which vexed the neighbouring states was almost unknown, and, though the forces of the Republic might occasionally suffer defeat and disaster in distant seas and in the Levant, life went on peacefully and pleasantly within the shelter of the Lagoon. The religious conscience of the people was easy-going, orthodox, and laudably inclined to listen to the voice of authority; neither disposed to nourish within the hidden canker of heresy, nor to let itself be worked up into ecstatic fever by any sudden conviction of ungodliness such as led to the lighting of the Bonfire of Vanities in Florence. In a society thus constituted it was inevitable that life should be easier, more gladsome, and more secure than in Milan, with the constant struggle of Pope against Emperor, and later on under the turbulent despotism of the Visconti and Sforzas; or that in Florence, with its constant civil broils and licentious pub-

lic life, which not even the craft and power of the leaders of the Medici could discipline into public order; or than in Naples, dominated by the Aragonese kings and harried by the greedy mercenaries in the royal employ; or than in Rome itself, vexed continually by intrigue, political and religious, and by the tumults generated by the violence and ambition of the ruling families.

A reflection of the gracious and placid life the Venetians led will be apparent to all who may observe and compare the art of Venice with the art of Milan, or Florence, or Naples. What a contrast is there between that charming idyll which Titian has made of the marriage of St. Catherine,¹ a group full of joy, and beauty, and sunlight, and set in the midst of one of those delightful sub-alpine landscapes which he painted with such rare skill and insight, and the many other renderings of the same subject by Lombard or Tuscan masters, who, al-

¹ In the National Gallery, London.

most invariably, put on the canvas some foreshadowing of the coming tragedy in the shape of the boding horror of the toothed wheel! The Madonnas of Carpaccio and Bellini are stately ladies, well nourished, and having about them that unmistakable air of distinction which grows up with the daily use and neighbourhood of splendid and luxurious modes of life. There is no doubt a look of gravity and holiness upon their handsome faces, but there is no sign, either in the pose or in the glance of them, that they are conscious of any embarrassment, and it would take a very keen eye to discern a trace of quasi-divinity, or of any trouble aroused by the caress of the mysterious child, or of the burden of that "intolerable honour" which has been thrust upon them unsought—a mood which latter-day preachers have detected in renderings of the same theme conceived and executed in the more emotional atmosphere of the Val d'Arno. Take these Venetian Ma-

donnas out of their pictured environment, and put on them a gala dress and sumptuous jewels, and one will find a bevy of comely dames who might well have kept company with the Signora Lucretia of the "Notti" in the fair garden at Murano, and listened to some sprightly story from Messer Pietro Bembo or from Messer Antonio Molino; or they might have gone out with the youths and damsels of whom Browning sings,

"Did young people take their pleasure when the
sea was warm in May?
Balls and masks began at midnight, burning ever
to mid-day,
When they made up fresh adventures for the mor-
row, do you say?"

In the pictures he draws Straparola illustrates a life like this, with now and then a touch of pathos, perhaps undesigned, as in the prologue to the second Night, *where he tells of the laughter of the blithe company*, ringing so loud and so

hearty that it seemed to him as if the sound of their merriment yet lingered in his ears.¹ There was, therefore, good reason why Straparola's imaginary exiles from the turbulent court of Milan should have sought at Murano, under the sheltering wings of St. Mark's lion, that ease and gaiety which they would have looked for in vain at home; there were also reasons equally valid why he should make the genius of the place inspire with its jocund spirit the stories with which the gentle company gathered around the Signora Lucretia wiled away the nights of carnival.² In the whole of the seventy-four fables there are hardly half-a-dozen which can be classed as tragic in tone, but of these one, the story of Malgherita Spolatina,³ is the finest of the whole collection. It is rarely one meets with anything told with such force and

¹ *Di che le donne, et parimente gli huomini fecero sì gran risa che ancora ridno.*

² Foreword, Vol. I., XI., XII.

³ Night VII., Fable II.

sincerity; yet, in placing before his readers this vivid picture of volcanic passion and studied ruthless revenge, Straparola uses the simplest treatment and succeeds *à merveille*. The fact that this fable and certain others of more than average merit belong to the category of stories to which no source or origin in other writings has been assigned, raises a regret that Straparola did not trust more to his own inventive powers and draw less freely upon Ser Giovanni and Morlini. Of these creations of his own the story of Flaminio Veraldo¹ is admirably told and strikingly original and dramatic in subject; so is that of Maestro Lattantio,² and, for a display of savage cynicism and withering rage, it would be hard to find anything more powerfully portrayed than the death of Andrigetto.³

In the fables of adventure, and in every other case where such treatment is possible, Straparola deals largely with

¹ Night IV., Fable V. ² Night VIII., Fable V.

³ Night X., Fable IV.

the supernatural. All the western versions, except Straparola's, of the story best known to us as "Giletta of Narbonne" and as "All's Well that Ends Well," are worked out without calling in auxiliaries of an unearthly character.¹ Boccaccio and Shakespeare bring together the husband and the forsaken wife by methods which, if somewhat strained, are quite natural; but Straparola at once calls for the witch and the magic horse, and whisks Isabella off to Flanders forthwith.² The interest of the reader is kept alive by accounts of the trials and dangers — a trifle bizarre now and again — which heroes and heroines are called to undergo, the taste of the age preferring apparently this stimulant to the intense dramatic power exhibited in the story of *Malgherita*, and demanding that the ending should be a happy one, for the pair of lovers nearly always marry in the end, and live long and blissful

¹ Foreword, Vol. I., XII.

² Night VII., Fable I.

years.¹ In the tales of country life and character *the fun is boisterous and even broad, but it is always real fun*, and the laugh rings true. Straparola is often as broad as Bandello, but, unlike Bandello, he never smirches his pages merely for the sake of setting forth some story of simple brutality, or of leading up to a climax which is at the same time painfully shocking and purposeless. Il Lasca in "Le Cene" makes as free use of the *beffe* and the *burle* as Straparola, but the last-named showed in the "Notti" that *he was incomparably the better hand* in dealing with his material. Il Lasca as a rule sets out his subject on the lines of the broadest farce, but he cannot keep to genuine farce, his natural bent of mind leading him always to elaborate his theme in some unseemly and offensive fashion. Very often he is obscene and savage at the same time, and the abominable practical jokes he makes his characters play

the one on the other must surely have outraged even the coarse feeding taste of the age in which he wrote. He delights in working up long stories of lust, and of infidelity, and of vengeance worked on account of these, in a spirit of heartless cruelty which, more often than not, is horrible without being in the least impressive, for the reason that, fine stylist as he was, he lacked the touch of the artist. Masuccio, though his savage indignation against the vices of the priests and monks occasionally became mere brutality, sounded now and then the note of real tragedy, and, inferior as he was to Il Lasca in style, was by far the better story-teller of the two. Both of these would be commonly set down as abler writers than Straparola, yet, by some means or other, *the latter could put a touch upon his work which was beyond the power of the others*—something *which enables one to read the "Notti"* without being conscious of that unpleasant after-taste which one almost always feels on

laying down either "Le Cene" or "Il Novellino."

Straparola's Italian is much more like the Italian of the present day than the English of Sidney or the German of Hans Sachs is like modern English or German, but this is not remarkable, considering how much earlier prose writing as an art came to perfection in Italy than in the rest of Europe. The impression gained by reading his prose is that he cared vastly more for the subject than for treatment. He laid hold of whatever themes promised to suit his purpose best as a story-teller, careless as to whether other craftsmen had used them before or not, and these he set forth in the simplest manner possible, taking little heed of his style or even of his grammar. He hardly ever indulges in a metaphor. One never feels that he has gone searching about fastidiously for some particular turn of phrase or neatly-fitting adjective; on the other hand, one is often obliged to pause in

the middle of some long sentence and search for his meaning in the strange mixture of phrases strung together. Perhaps this spontaneity, this absence of studied design, may have helped to win for him the wide popularity he enjoyed. His aim was to lead his readers into some enchanted garden of fairyland; to thrill them with the woes and perils of his heroes and heroines; to shake their sides with laughter over the misadventures of some too amorous monk or lovesick cavalier, rather than to send them into ecstasy over the measured elegance of his phrases. In many of the later editions of the "Notti," the meaning has been further obscured, and the style rendered more rugged than ever, owing to the frequent and clumsy excisions made by the censors of morals. The early exclusion of the fourth Fable of the ninth Night shows that the eye of authority was soon attracted towards the popular novelist of the age. The motive for this activity was nominally

the care of public morals, and one of the few extant references to Straparola is with regard to the expurgation of his works. In "Cremona Illustrata," by Franciscus Arisius (Cremona, 1741), we read concerning Caravaggio: "In hoc enim oppido inclytæ stirpis Sfortiadum antiquo feudo ortum habuit Io. Franciscus Straparola cujus liber sæpe editus circumfertur italice hoc programme: 'Le tredici piacevolissime notti overo favole ed enimmi.' Liber vetitus a sacra indicis congregatione et jure quidem merito cum obscenitates sordidas contineat moribus plerumque obnoxias et pluribi vulgatas. Optime quippe animadvertit Possevinus S. J. de cultura ingeniorum cap. 52, quod expediens esset homines potius nasci mutos et rationis expertes, quàm in propriam et aliorum perniciam divinæ providentiæ dona convertere, imo ante eum ejusdem sententiæ fuisse M. F. Quintilianum licet gentilem, ipse Possevinus confirmat."

On reading even the most severely castrated edition of the "Notti," one may be at first a little surprised to find that some of the most fulsome stories have been left almost untouched, and it is not until one realizes the fact that expurgation has been held to mean the cutting out of every word *concerning religion and its professors*, that one fully understands the principle upon which "Possevinus S. J." and his colleagues worked. The presence of matter injurious to public morals had evidently less to do with the action of these reformers than certain anecdotes describing the presence of priests and nuns in certain places where, by every rule of good manners, they ought not to have been found. In plain words, the book was prohibited and castrated on account of the ugly picture of clerical morals which was exhibited in its pages.¹ A glance

¹ "Die XIII. nächtlichen Erzählungen sammt den Logogryphen welche Argellati, 'ingeniosissime conflata quamvis parum pudice,' nennt wurden zu Rom durch

at any of the editions issued "con licenza de' superiori" will show that the revisers went to their work with set purpose, caring nought as to the mangled mass of letterpress they might leave behind them. In some fables bits are cut out so clumsily that the point of the story is entirely lost; in others the feelings of orthodoxy are spared by changing the hero of amorous intrigue from a *Prete* to a *Giovane*. In one a pope is reduced to a mere initial (of course standing for a layman), and the famous story of Belphegor is left out altogether. It was surely little short of impertinent to ask for a condemnation of the "Notti" on the ground of offence to public decency from a generation which read such books as "Les facétieuses journées" of Chapuys and "Les contes aux heures

das Decret vom 16ten Dec. 1605, einigen darin enthaltenen unzüchtigen Stellen wegen verboten" (preface to Vienna translation, 1791). The book must have been condemned by the index some time before this, as the issue of 1604, Ven., "con licenza de' Superiori" is rigorously castrated.

perdues ; " which witnessed the issue of Morlini's novels and of Cinthio degli Fabritii's book, " Dell' origine delli volgari proverbii," printed " cum privilegio summi pontificis et sacrae Cæsareæ majestatis ; " a generation for which Poggio's obscene fables were favourite reading, and which remembered that Pietro Bembo had been a cardinal and Giovanni di Medici a pope.

It is impossible to indicate precisely the sources of the fables *seriatim*, seeing that in many cases there was available for Straparola a choice of origins. An approximate reckoning would give fifteen fables to the novelists who preceded him, twenty-two to Jerome Morlini, four to mediæval and seven to oriental legends, thus leaving twenty-eight to be classed as original. From beginning to end he certainly made free use of all the storehouses of materials which were available, selecting therefrom whatever subjects pleased him, and working them up to the best of his skill. It was un-

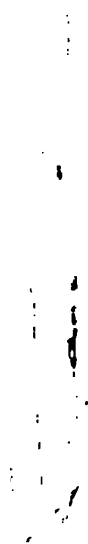
reasonable to censure him on this score, seeing that in what he did he merely followed the fashion of the age. He borrowed from Ser Giovanni, and Ser Giovanni borrowed also from the "Directorium" and the "Gesta Romanorum." Folk-lorists have discovered for us the fact that all the stories the world ever listened to may, by proper classification, be shown to be derived from some half-dozen sources. As the sorting and searching goes on, new facts constantly come to light, the drift of which tends to prove that the charge of plagiarism is now almost meaningless. It is hard to say what new and strange fruits may not be gathered from the wide field now covered by the folk-lorist. Formerly he hunted only in the East; now we find him amongs the Lapps and the Zulus—in Labrador, and in the South Pacific as well. A still more extended search will very likely find a fresh source for those of the fables in the "Notti" which have heretofore been

classed as the original work of Straparola, and will discover for us a new and genuine author of "Puss in Boots."

Hide thou whatever here is found of fault ;
And laud the Faultless and His might exalt !



Notes.





Notes.

Night the First.

THE FIRST FABLE.

Salardo —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. “Gesta Romanorum,” c. 124. — “Cento Novelle Antiche,” Nov. C. — Sacchetti, Nov. XV. — “Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles,” Nov. LII., “Les trois monumens.” — Hans Sachs, “Der Marschall Sophus und sein Sohn.” — Gueulette, “Contes Tartares,” “L’histoire de Sinadab fils du Médecin Saccan.” “Cabinet des Fées,” t. 21, p. 66.

The story in the “Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles” is a translation of Sacchetti’s novel. This fable was published in London in 1790 under the title, “Novella cioe copia d’un Caso notabile intervenuto a un gran gentiluomo Genovese.”

THE SECOND FABLE.

Cassandrino —

This story may have been suggested by the history of Rhampsinitus given by Herodotus, ii. 121.

Imitations and Parallels. Grimm, No. 192, "The Master Thief." — Wolf, "Hausmärchen." — "Inventaire général de l'histoire des Larrons." Paris, 1625.

THE THIRD FABLE.

Scarpafico —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. "Hitopadesa." — "Directorium," John of Capua, i. 10. — "Gesta Romanorum," 132. — Fortini, Nov. VIII. — Boccaccio, "Decameron," IX. 3. — "Poggii Facetiæ," CCLXVIII. — "Cento Novelle Antiche." — Hans Sachs, "Der Schwanger Pauer." — "Till Owleglass," 78. — Gueulette, 106-109 ("Cabinet des Fées," t. 22, p. 132). — Grimm, "Household Tales," No. 61, "The Little Peasant" (ed. Lang, London, 1884).¹ — "Nouveaux Contes à rire." — Lover, "Legends and Stories of Ireland," "Little Fairly." — Imbriani, "Novellaja Milanese," 23. — Andersen, "Little Klaus and Big Klaus." — Pitré, "Fiabe, Racconti e Novelle," 157, "Uncle Capriano" (Lu Zu Crapianu). — Stahl, "Mitternachtblatt," 35 and 36. — Campbell, "Popular Tales of the West Highlands," vol. ii., p. 229.

This fable is made up of two separate stories. In Poggio's tale three rogues persuade a fool first

¹ Quotations from Grimm may always be referred to this edition.

that he is sick, then that he is very sick, and finally that he is dead ; and Owleglass makes a boor believe that green cloth is blue. "Little Fairly," which is a parallel to the part of the fable describing Scarpafico's revenge on the knaves, is a version of a widely-spread popular legend, and is very much like Straparola's tale. In the story of "Peasant Kibitz" (Büsching, "Volkssagen," p. 296), there are certain variations. Kibitz lets his wife be killed by the peasants, and then sets her up by some railings with a basket of fruit. A servant, who has been ordered by his master and mistress to buy something from her, pushes her into the water because she returns no answer. For this Kibitz receives the carriage the master was driving, and all belonging to it. In the people's book, "Rutschki, or the Burgher of Quarkenquatsch," various incidents from this story are used, the purchasing of the old chest, in which the lover is hidden, for the cowhide, and the setting up the dead wife. Rutschki puts some butter in her lap, and sets her by the side of the well, and the apothecary, coming to buy butter, can get no answer from her, so he shakes her, and pushes her into the well, for which he has to pay Rutschki a thousand thalers. The betrayal of the shepherd at the end is also quite different. Rutschki, having been condemned to death, is shut in a chest and carried to the pond ; but, as this is frozen, the peasants leave the chest

by the brink while they go to get tools to break the ice. A cattle dealer comes by, and Rutschki, hearing him pass, calls out, "I will not drink any wine; I am not thirsty." The cattle dealer asks him what he means, and Rutschki tells him that he has been elected burgomaster, but that he cannot take the post because, as burgomaster, he would be obliged, when he took office, to drink a glass of Burgundy, and he never drinks wine. He also says they have set him there in order that the frost may make him long for a warm draught. The cattle dealer offers to give him his herd in exchange for his place in the chest. Rutschki agrees, and after the exchange bolts the dealer in the chest and goes off with the cattle. The peasants, after they have put the chest into the pond, meet Rutschki with the cattle, and learn from him that he found them at the bottom of the pond, whereupon they all jump in and are drowned. — Grimm, vol. i., p. 423.

The trick of pretended murder through stabbing a bladder filled with blood has a parallel in an episode in Achilles Tatius. See also Max Müller, "Chips from a German Workshop," for remarks on the "Master Thief," vol. ii., p. 232.

THE FOURTH FABLE.

Tebaldo —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. "Le Roman de la Belle Hélène de Constantinople." — Mat.

thew Paris, "Legend of Offa, King of the West Angles." — "Emaré," an old English rhyme, edited by Ritson. — Ser Giovanni, "Il Pecorone," X. 1. — Gower, "Confessio Amantis." — Chaucer, "The Man of Lawe's Tale." — Grimm, No. 65, "Allerleirauh." — Basile, "Pentamerone," II. 6. — Pitré, "Fiabe, Novelle e Racconti," No. 43. — R. H. Busk, "Folk-lore of Rome," "Maria di Legno." — Perrault, "Peau d'Âne." — In Crane's "Italian Popular Tales," p. 337, references to many parallel stories are given.

Tebaldo's craft in getting the children into his power by offering the spindles to the queen, recalls the trick of the magician in the story of Aladdin, and the episode of the bloody knife might have been taken direct from Chaucer :

"Werie for-wiked in their orisons

Slepith Cunstance and Hermigild also,

This knight through Sathanas temptatiouns

All softly is unto the bedd ygo,

And cut the throte of Hermigild atwo ;

And laid the bloddy knife by Dame Cunstance,

And went his wey, there God geve him mischance."

Night the Second.

THE FIRST FABLE.

Galeotto —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. "Pantcha Tantra." — See Loiseleur-Deslongchamps, "Essai sur les Fables indiennes" (Paris, 1838), p. 39. — Pitré, "Fiabe, Novelle e Racconti," No. 56, "La Sirpenti." — Comparetti, "Novelline," No. 9 and No. 36. — Basile, "Pentamerone," II. 5. — Madame D'Aulnoy, "Le Prince Marcassin." — Count Hamilton's fairy tales, "Pertharite et Ferandine." — Grimm, No. 108, "Hans the Hedgehog." — Perrault, "Riquet à la Houppe."

Pitré in notes to No. 56 gives "Il Re Cavallu" and "Il Re Scursini" as parallel fables. There is a similar story in Campbell's "West Highland Tales," and another in Crane's "Italian Popular Tales," "Zelinda and the Monster." "The Enchanted Pig," a story from the Roumanian, given by Mr. Lang in the "Red Fairy Book," comes also under the same formula, as does one in "Cossack Fairy Tales," R. Nisbet Bain.

THE SECOND FABLE.

Filenio —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. Ser Giovanni, "Il Pecorone," II. 2. — "Les deux changeurs," Montaignon, "Reccuil général," I.

245. — "Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles," I. — Bandello, Part I., Nov. 3. A translation of this fable is given in Painter's "Palace of Pleasure." The plot of the three ladies against Filenio may have suggested that of Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page in the "Merry Wives of Windsor."

THE THIRD FABLE.

Carlo —

Sources. Jacopo di Voragine, "Legenda aurea." — Bollandi, "Acta Sanctorum." — "Dulcitius," a comedy written by Hroswitha, a Saxon monk, at the end of the tenth century.

THE FOURTH FABLE.

The devil —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. Macchiavelli, "Belphegor." — "Brevio," Nov. 4. — Sansovino, "Cento novelle." — Chapuys, "Les Facétieuses Journées," III. 3. — La Fontaine, "Contes," "Belphegor." — R. Browning, "Dramatic Idyls," "Dr. —." *Vide* Dunlop's "History of Fiction," London, 1888, vol. ii., p. 188, note.

THE FIFTH FABLE.

Simplicio —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. Boccaccio, "Decameron," VIII. 8. — Chapuys, "Les Facétieuses Journées," IX. 8. — La Fontaine, "Contes," "Les Rémois."

Night the Third.

THE FIRST FABLE.

A simple fellow —

Imitations. Basile, "Pentamerone," I. 3. Madame D'Aulnoy, "Dauphin." — Cinthio degli Fabritii gives the story of a fisherman who was endowed by a magic fish with powers somewhat akin to Pietro's.

Vide notes by Lainez in the French translation of Straparola by Louveau and De la Rivey (1726).

THE SECOND FABLE.

Dalfreno —

Dr. F. W. Schmidt, in "Die Märchen des Straparola" (Berlin, 1817), has collected in his notes to this fable numerous examples of the fairy horse in the popular tales of the middle ages. The manner in which the hero procures the water of life recalls the parallel episode in Night IV., Fable 3, and may like this latter have been taken from "The Thousand and One Nights." The restoration of Livoretto to life has a parallel in the story of Virgilius, as given in "Early English Prose Romances," ed. Thoms (1858), and in that of Medea. The search for the water of life and youth is the theme of countless stories of all periods, from the time of Alexander to that of Ponce de Leon. Compare also Basile, "Pentamerone," III. 7, for difficult

tasks put upon a favoured courtier ; Grimm, No. 62, "The Queen Bee," and "Tooti Nameh," No. 21.

THE THIRD FABLE.

Biancabella —

Imitation. "Illustres Fées," "Blanchebelle."

THE FOURTH FABLE.

Fortunio —

Source and Imitation. Ser Giovanni, "Il Pecorone," IX. 2. — Madame D'Aulnoy, "L'Oiseau Bleu." The theme of this story seems to be a variation of that of "Œdipus."

THE FIFTH FABLE.

Isotta —

This is one of the stories of the youth who could not be made to lie. Versions of it occur in "Gesta Romanorum," c. 111, and in the "Forty Viziers." It is also to be found in Pitré, "Fiabe, Novelle e Racconti," No. 78 ; in Imbriani, "Conti Pomiglianesi," No. XII., "Giuseppe a Vereta" ; and in "Turkish Tales" (London, 1769), vol. ii., p. 258, "History of Saddyq, Master of the Horse to Togaltimur Can."

Oesterley's notes to the "Gesta Romanorum" (Berlin, 1872), and Loiseleur Deslongchamp's "Essai sur les Fables indiennes," may be consulted as to the oriental origin of this fable.

Night the Fourth.

THE FIRST FABLE.

Richard —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. "The Thousand and One Nights." — "The Romance of Merlin." — "Romance of the Seven Sages." — Basile, "Pentamerone," IV. 6. — Gueulette, "Contes Tartares," "Le Centaure Bleue."

In the "Romance of Merlin," the enchanter visits the palace of Julius Cæsar in the shape of a stag, and interprets a certain dream in which Cæsar had seen a crowned sow and twelve young lions which he caused to be burnt. The stag tells Cæsar that only a wild man can declare the meaning of the dream, whereupon Cæsar offers his daughter as a reward to the man who shall bring such a savage before him. Merlin reappears as a wild man of the woods, and laughs when he sees the empress and her twelve ladies in waiting, explaining to Cæsar that the sow is the empress, and the lions her attendants, who are really men in women's attire. The whole thirteen are straightway consigned to the flames. Liebrecht, in his notes to Dunlop, compares this story with that of Vararuchi ("Somadeva," ed. Brockhaus, Bd. i., p. 35). In this the king orders a certain Brahmin, with whom the queen was wont to converse, to be led off to execution. As the condemned man was

going through the market place, a fish lying on a stall laughed aloud, whereupon the king demanded of the Brahmin what might be the meaning of this. The Brahmin explains that the fish laughed because the king's wives lived licentiously, keeping in the palace a number of young men disguised as women. The episode of the Sultana and the disguised slaves in the Introduction to "The Thousand and One Nights" is akin to a part of the story, and there is likewise a parallel to it in the "Tooti Nameh."

Benfey remarks that the version of the story given in the "Romance of Merlin" and in "Straparola" is more faithful to the Indian original than the Turkish or Persian form.

THE SECOND FABLE.

Erminione —

Sources. The "Romance of Virgilius." In Rome Virgil made a brazen serpent, which was set up in a public place. Litigants were accustomed to swear to the truth of their speech, holding their hands in the serpent's mouth, and if they swore falsely their hands would be bitten off. The bronze mask, the "Bocca della Verita," which is still to be seen under the portico of Sta. Maria in Cosmedin in Rome is associated with this legend.

In Pauli's "Schimpf und Ernst" there is a story, No. 206, which is almost exactly like Straparola's fable. See also Malespini, No. 98.

THE THIRD FABLE.

Ancilotto —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. "The Thousand and One Nights." — "Dolopathos," the metrical version of the "Seven Wise Masters." — Madame D'Aulnoy, "Princesse Belle Étoile." — Grimm, No. 96, "The three little Birds." — Carlo Gozzi, "L'Aguellino bel Verde." — Pröhle, "Märchen," No. 3. — Wolf, "Hausmärchen," p. 168.

The guardian dragon of the tree and the coat covered with mirrors occur also in the story of "Alexander and the Basilisk," as given in "Historia Alexandri Magni de præliis." Dr. Schmidt in his notes to this fable gives similar instances from the "Gesta Romanorum," and from Vincentius Bellovicensis, "Speculum Historiale."

In the "Augellino bel Verde," Carlo Gozzi — who as a Venetian probably went to the "Piacevoli Notti" for his materials — has constructed a story much less like to the Eastern original than Straparola's, and has very cleverly woven into it a satire on the philosophic ideals of the period, after the fashion then current. The wicked queen-mother, Tortagliona, causes to be buried alive her daughter-in-law, Ninetta, on the pretence that she has brought forth two puppies, and has ordered Pantaleone, the chief minister, to drown the real children. They are rescued by the wife of a pork-butcher named Truffaldino, a worthless ruffian, who

soon turns them out of doors. But they, in the meantime, have become learned in philosophy by reading stray leaves of the works of Helvetius and Holbach, which Truffaldino had used to wrap up his sausages, and they now hold that wisdom lies in choking every feeling and in flying to solitude. They come upon a broken statue, which proves to be the *eidolon* of one Calmon, who, 300 years ago, had been turned into marble through holding opinions like theirs. The brother and sister laugh at him and go their way, taking with them a magic stone which he gives them. Afterwards, when they throw the stone into the air, a sumptuous palace rises before them, and in this they live blessed with every luxury. Truffaldino now reappears, explaining that he is advised to seek them now they are rich, just as he felt obliged to cast them out when they were poor, self-love being the only guide of action. Renzo, the brother, hereupon kicks him out, and, like his sister Barbarina, becomes somewhat spoilt by prosperity. In the meantime the little green bird has been keeping alive the ill-starred Ninetta in her tomb. Tartaglia, the king, her husband, grows almost doting, and one day sees the magic palace from his own window, and falls in love with Barbarina, and proposes to marry her. She, ignorant as to who he is, and fired by ambition, consents; but the queen-mother, suspecting evil, refuses to allow the marriage unless the bride

shall bring as a dower the singing apple, the dancing water, and the little green bird. Barbarina urges her brother to seek the same. This adventure is almost the same as the one told by Straparola, but in the restoration of the statues to life Gozzi puts in divers local touches which must have delighted a Venetian audience exceedingly.

THE FOURTH FABLE.

Nerino —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. Ser Giovanni, "Il Pecorone," I. 2. — Masuccio, Novels 34 and 35. — Molière, "L'École des Femmes." — Doni, "Novelle," No. 38. — La Fontaine, "Contes," "Le Maître en Droit."

In the "Merry Wives of Windsor," Shakespeare probably drew upon an English version of Ser Giovanni's tale for those scenes where Falstaff describes the progress of his intrigue with Mrs. Ford, and the contrivances by which he escaped the search of the jealous husband. As this story does not occur in the Painter, Shakespeare must have gone to Tarleton's "Newes out of Purgatorie," in which the tale is told under the title of "The two Lovers of Pisa," or to the collection, "The fortunate, deceived, and unfortunate Lovers," the first story of which, "Lucius and Camillus," is a translation of Ser Giovanni's "Bucciolo and Pietro Paulo."

Night the fifth.

THE FIRST FABLE.

Guerrino —

Imitations and Parallels. Basile, "Pentamerone," III. 7. In this story is an episode closely allied to the tasks put upon Guerrino. — Madame D'Aulnoy, "Prince Guerini." — Grimm, No. 136, "Iron John." — Wolf, "Hausmärchen," p. 269.

The cure of the fairy by a fit of laughter has a parallel in a passage in Grimm, No. 64, "The Golden Goose;" in "Les quatre Facadins," "Cabinet des Fées;" in "Il Medico Grillo," "Novelle popolari Toscani;" Pitré; and in Basile, "Pentamerone," III. 5.

In this fable are combined several of the leading motives of the popular story-teller. The wild man of the woods, a figure found in the folk-lore of every European country, as well as in the "Orlando Innamorato" of Boiardo; the knight who is taken to live with a fairy, as in the ballads of "Tamlane" and "True Thomas;" the heroic youth who is sent to perform impossible tasks; and the ordeal by choice.

THE SECOND FABLE.

Adamantina —

Imitations and Parallels. Nerucci, "Novelle popolari Montalesi," "Il Ciuchino caca-zecchini."

— Basile, "Pentamerone," I. 1, and V. 1. — The story of the "Goose with the Golden Eggs" comes under the same formula as this fable. See Clouston, "Popular Tales and Fictions," vol. i., p. 123.

THE THIRD FABLE.

Bertaldo —

Sources, Imitations, an Parallels. "Les Trois Bossus" (Montaiglon, "Recueil général et complet des Fabliaux des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles," Paris, 1872), No. 2. — "Estourmi," fabliau par Hugues Piaucele, also in the above-named collection, No. 19. — "The Thousand and One Nights." — "The Seven Wise Masters." — In Dunlop's "History of Fiction," vol. ii., p. 42, is a long list of variations of the same story. — Gueulette, "Contes Tartares," "Les Trois Bossus de Damas." — Pitré, "Fiabe, Novelle e Racconti," No. 164.

THE FOURTH FABLE.

Marsilio —

Source. Boccaccio, "Decameron," VII. 1.

The motive of the blindfolded husband is a common one in the "Hitopadesa." It recurs in the "Disciplina Clericalis," Petrus Alphonsus, in the "Gesta Romanorum," and in many of the French fabliaux.

Night the Sixth.

THE FIRST FABLE.

Two friends —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. Boccaccio, "Decameron," VIII. 8. — Cinthio degli Fabritii, "Libro della origine delli volgari proverbi," No. XVI. — "Poggii Facetiæ," CCXXIII. — "Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles," Novel 3. — Bonaventure des Periers, "Contes ou nouvelles récréations," Nouvelle 2. — La Fontaine, "Contes," "Le Faiseur d'oreilles." — Grécourt, "Poésies," "Les cheveux et la réponse imprévu."

This fable is made up of two separate stories. The first part is taken from Poggio, and the second from "Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles."

THE FIFTH FABLE.

Pre Zefiro —

Source. Morlini, "Novellæ fabulæ et comedix," Novella LXI., "De Clerico."

A passage in the story reads like a translation from Pauli's "Schimpf und Ernst." Pre Zefiro's conjuration may be compared with the advice which the wise Solomon gives to a sorely-tormented husband. "In Worten in Kräutern und in Steinen ist grosse Kraft. Da der Mann die beiden ersten angeblich angewandt hatte versuchte er die in den Steinen verborgene Kraft." — "Schimpf und Ernst," Augsburg, 1597, p. 101.

Night the Seventh.

THE FIRST FABLE.

Ortodosio —

Sources and Imitations. Boccaccio, "Decameron," III. 9. The subject of this story was a favourite one with the French novelists, and several versions of it may be found in "Nouvelles françaises en prose du XIII^e siècle," edited by MM. Molau et d'Hericault (Bibliothèque Elzevir.). — Basi "Pentamerone," V. 6.

Boccaccio's "Giletta of Narbonne," which Straparola has here imitated, is commonly held to be the source (through Painter's translation) of Shakespeare's "All's Well that Ends Well;" and in 1511 Bernardo Accolti wrote a comedy called "Virginia," also taken from this source. In "Sagenkreise," I. iv., p. 377, Graesse suggests the "Romance of Comte d'Artois et de sa Femme" as the probable origin of Boccaccio's tale.

In the "Somadeva" (ed. Brockhaus), B. xii p. 125; in "Hindoo Tales, or the Adventures of Ten Princes," Jacob's translation; in Fauche, "Traditions," vol. ii., p. 220; and in "Indian Fairy Tales" (Stokes), are to be found examples of the oriental versions of this story.

THE SECOND FABLE.

Malgherita —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. The first part of this story was probably suggested by Hero and Leander. — Chapuys, “*Facétieuses Journées*,” IV. 4. — “*Euphrosiné et Melidor*,” Bernard le Gentil.

THE THIRD FABLE.

Cimarosta —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. Sacchetti, Nov. CXCIV. — Weber’s “*Metrical Romances*,” “*The Ballad of Sir Cleges*.” — See Graesse, “*Sagenkreise*,” p. 251. — “*Nouveaux Contes à rire*,” “*Le Brochet de Florentin*.” — T. Wright, “*Latin Stories*,” “*De janitore imperatoris Frederici*.”

THE FIFTH FABLE.

Three brothers —

Sources and Parallels. Morlini, Nov. LXXX. “*de Fratribus*.” — “*Tales of a Parrot*” (*Tooti Nameh*), from the Persian of Nakshebi, No. 22. (London, 1801). — Grimm, 129, “*The Four Skilful Brothers*.” — Basile, “*Pentamerone*,” V. 7. Clouston, “*Popular Tales and Fictions*,” cites several versions of this story, vol. i., p. 277.

Night the Eighth.

THE FIRST FABLE.

Three rogues —

Sources. This story is one of the numerous class dealing with foolish and obstinate people. See Bernoni, "Fiabe popolari" (Venice, 1875), Fable XIII. — Pitré, "Fiabe, Novelle e Racconti," Nos. 181 and 257. — "Poggii Facetiæ," LIX. There is a novel dealing with the same subject by Antonio Guadagnoli, "La lingua d'una donna alla prova." Pitré notices several Sicilian popular tales of a like character in his remarks on No. 257. To the same category belongs the popular story of the obstinate wife who disputed with her husband on the subject of "scissors."

THE SECOND FABLE.

Two brothers —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. Hugues Piaucele, "Fabliau de Sire Hain et de Dame Anieuse," Legrand d'Aussy, iii. 175, and also the "Fabliau de la dame qui fut corrigée," iii. 187, in the same collection ("Fabliaux, ou contes, fables et romans du XII^e et du XIII^e siècle," Paris, 1829). — Sacchetti, Nov. 138. — "Der böse Rauch," Hans Sachs. — Tieck's "Deutsches Theater," i. 19. — "Der Rauch beisst," an old German ballad in Mone's "Anzeiger," v. 79.

Molière's "École des Maris" may have been suggested by this fable.

THE FOURTH FABLE.

Bernardo —

Sources. "Cento Novelle Antiche," XCV. — Morlini, Nov. XLVII., "De Mercatore Jannuensi."

THE FIFTH FABLE.

Maestro Lattantio —

The episode of the cock and the pomegranate seeds recalls a similar one in "The Second Calendar's Story" in the "Thousand and One Nights," and is probably an imitation of it; and the bridle incident may have been taken from "Gulnare of the Sea."

A story called "The Italian Tailor and his Boy" by Robert Armin, printed in 1609, is an imitation of this fable. It has also been translated into French by Chapuys in "Les Facétieuses Journées" (1584). There is a like story in Celio Malespini; also in Grimm, No. 68, "The Thief and his Master;" in "Fiabe Mantovane" (Turin, 1879), No. 8; in Pröhle, "Märchen für die Jugend," No. 26; in "Wallachian Stories," A. and W. Schott, No. 18; in "Eventyr og Folkesagen," Etlaar, p. 36; in "Utile col dolce," a novel by P. Casalicchio; and in "Cossack Fairy Tales," R. Nisbet Bain.

THE SIXTH FABLE.

A history of two physicians —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. "Poggii Facetiæ," CIX. — Morlini, Nov. XXXII., "De medico et mediculo." — See Pitré, "Fiabe, Novelle e Racconti," No. 180, "L'appinnista di lu medicu." — In Pauli's "Schimpf und Ernst" there is a similar episode, the lesser doctor being the other's assistant. This fable has also been imitated by Chapuys in "Les Facétieuses Journées," VIII. 9.

Night the Ninth.

THE SECOND FABLE.

Rodolino, son of Lodovico —

Source. Boccaccio, "Decameron," VIII. 4.

THE THIRD FABLE.

Francesco Sforza —

He was the younger son of Lodovico Moro and last duke of Milan, and on the death of his brother Massimiliano became duke. After his death in 1535 the duchy was seized by the Emperor Charles V.

Lainez in his notes to the French translation of Straparola (1726) says that the adventure told in this story really happened to Maximilian of Austria — afterwards Maximilian II. — the son of the Emperor Ferdinand I.

THE FOURTH FABLE.

Pre Papiro —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. The episode of the capons taken to the bishop occurs in "Poggii Facetiæ," XXII. — Bonaventure des Periers, "Contes ou nouvelles récréations," Nov. XXI. — "Discours facétieux et très récréatifs" (1610), p. 16.

THE SIXTH FABLE.

A certain priest —

In De la Rivey's translation this story stands as Fable IV., Night IX. In his notes to the issue of 1857 M. Jannet says that in all the editions of Straparola published since 1557 it has been replaced by "Pre Papiro Schizza," thus implying that it would be found in all the issues prior to that date. But it is neither in that of 1555 nor in that of 1556. The earlier editions of Part II. (1553 and 1554) I have not been able to consult.

I can find no trace of this story elsewhere than in the authorities given by M. Jannet, so I transcribe his notes as they stand.

"Origines. Le prêtre crucifié, fabliau, analysé par Legrand d'Aussy, t. iv., p. 160. — Sacchetti, Nov. 84. — Legrand d'Aussy indique un autre fabliau sur le même sujet intitulé 'Le Forgeron de Creil' reproduit dans Malespini, Nov. 93, dans 'l'Enfant sans souci,' p. 274. — Dans les Cent

Nouvelles Nouvelles, Nouvelle 64, même accident arrive à un prêtre, par suite d'une plaisanterie imprudente. Cette nouvelle se retrouve dans Henri Estienne, 'Apologie pour Herodote,' chap. xv., Amst., 1785, t. i., p. 297. — Dans Agnolo Firenzuolo, Nov. IV., un prêtre surpris par le mari, est contraint de se châtrer lui-même."

In his notes to the French translation of 1726, Lainez gives the title of the story in Italian: "Frate Tiberio Palavicino apostata, poi fatto Prete Secolare et Maestro in Theologia, ama la moglie di Maestro Checino intagliatore. Ella con consenso del marito in casa l'introduce, e trovata da lui, con una ignominiosa beffa fuori lo manda e da morte lo libera."

Lainez declares that this fable was suppressed in the greater number of the Italian editions as too offensive to religion. Certain editions omit it, even when retaining Fable IV., Night VI., a somewhat eccentric feat of censorship, seeing that the last-named fable and certain others, *i.e.*, Night I., Fable V.; Night X., Fable IV.; Night XI., Fable V.; Night XIII., Fable XI., exhibit the churchmen of the time in an equally unfavourable light.

Brakelmann in his "Inaugural Dissertation" repeats more than once Jannet's misstatement that this fable was first taken out of Night IX. in the edition of 1558.

Night the Tenth.

THE SECOND FABLE.

An ass —

Upon this fable is founded "*Brancaleone, Historia piacevole et morale*" da Antonio Giovanni Besozzi (Milan, 1610). Köhler, "*Jahrbuch*," viii., p. 246, gives various notes on the trials of skill between the ass and the lion. In "*Discorsi degli Animali*," Messer Agnolo Firenzuolo, is a story of a similar contention between a lion and an ox. In Pitré, "*Fiabe, Novelle e Racconti*" there is a parallel story, "*Brancaleuini*," No. 271.

THE THIRD FABLE.

Cesarino —

In "*Die Märchen des Straparola*" by Dr. F. W. Schmidt there are copious notes to this fable illustrative of the cases in which various heroes of romance have been aided by benevolent animals. In this fable the liberation of the princess is a form of the Andromeda legend. There is a similar story in Schneller, "*Märchen und Sagen*" (Innsbruck, 1867), No. 39; also in Basile, "*Pentamerone*," I. 7; in "*Somadeva*" (ed. Brockhaus), Bd. ii., p. 142; in Grimm, No. 60, "*The Two Brothers*;" and in "*Cossack Fairy Tales*," R. Nisbet Bain.

Night the Eleventh.

THE FIRST FABLE.

Soriana —

Straparola seems to be the originator of this story, but it is manifestly akin to the "benevolent animal" class of fable. Gonzenbach ("Sicilianische Märchen") gives one, No. 53, which resembles it somewhat, and in Basile, "Pentamerone," II. 4, there is a still closer version. There is also a Tyrolese variation in Schneller, "Märchen und Sagen" (Innsbruck, 1867), "Il Conte Martin dalla Gatta."

This story spread through Western Europe through Perrault's fable "Le Chat Botté," and through Tieck's. It may be remarked that Straparola's cat does not wear boots, and that the concluding episode is greatly amplified by Perrault. In Straparola the owner of the castle is absent when Constantino arrives, and is killed on his way home. Perrault gives us the ogre in possession, who is eaten by the cat after changing himself into a mouse. The fate of the ogre may have been suggested by that of Maestro Lattantio. See note to Night VIII., Fable V. The version in Tabart's "Collection of Popular Stories for the Nursery," (London, 1809), is a translation of Perrault's fable.

THE SECOND FABLE.

Xenofonte —

In "Italian Popular Tales," Mr. T. F. Crane gives an Istrian story, "Fair Brow," which is practically the same as this fable, and many references to others of a similar character, pp. 350, 351.

THE THIRD FABLE.

Don Pomporio —

The fable told by Pomporio, "Wind, Water, and Honour," is found in Pitré, No. 274. Gasparo Gozzi also has a version of it, "Il Fuoco l'Acqua e l'Onore": "Il Fuoco l'Acqua e l'Onore fecero un tempo comunella insieme. Il Fuoco non puo mai stare in un luogo, e l'Acqua anche sempre si muove, onde tratti dalla loro inclinazione, indussero l'Onore a far viaggio in compagnia. Prima dunque di partirsi tutti e tre dissero che bisognava darsi fra loro un segno da potersi ritrovare se mai si fossero scostati e smarriti l'uno dall' altro. Disse il Fuoco, e se mi avvenisse mai questo caso che io mi segnasse da voi, ponete ben mente colà dove voi vedete fumo: questo e il mio segnale e quivi mi troverete certamente. E me, disse l'Acqua se voi non mi vedete piu non mi cercate dove vedrete seccura o spaccature di terra; dove vedrete salci alni cannuce o erba molto alta e verde, andate costa in traccia di me e quivi sarò io. Quanto a me disse l'Onore, spalancate ben gli occhi e ficcate-

migli bene adosso e tenetemi saldo perchè se la mala ventura mi guida fuori di cammino sicchè io mi perda una volta non mi trovereste piu mai."

THE FOURTH FABLE.

A buffoon —

Source. Morlini, Nov. VII., "Excellentis quondam Hectoris Carafæ."

THE FIFTH FABLE.

Frate Bigoccio —

Source. Morlini, Nov. XXXVI., "De monacho qui duxit uxorem."

In this case Straparola has altered Morlini's fable by adding the episode of the gloves and jesses. M. Jannet, in his notes to De la Rivey's translation, says that Morlini borrowed the above-named incident from Cornazzano, but he is here in error, as there is not a trace of it in Morlini's fable.

Night the Twelfth.

THE FIRST FABLE.

Florio —

Sources. Morlini, Nov. XXVI., "De viro zelotypo." — Masuccio, "Il Novellino," II. 1.

THE SECOND FABLE.

A certain fool —

Source. Morlini, Nov. XXX., “De stulto qui mulierem pulchram devenustavit.”

THE THIRD FABLE.

Federigo —

Sources. “The Thousand and One Nights,” Introduction. — Morlini, Nov. LXXII., “De Puteolano.” — “Gesta Romanorum,” c. 68.

In “Schimpf und Ernst” (Stuttgart, 1866), there is a story akin to this, “Ein bösz Weib tugenhaft zemachen,” No. 134. Dr. Schmidt’s notes on this fable concerning the language of animals are very full and interesting. See “Die Märchen des Straparola,” pp. 323–329.

THE FOURTH FABLE.

Concerning certain sons —

Source. Morlini, Nov. XXXII., “De filiis.”

THE FIFTH FABLE.

Sixtus —

Sources and Parallels. “Barlaam and Josaphat,” ch. 6. — “Gesta Romanorum,” c. 109. — Vincentius Bellovicensis, “Speculum Historiale,” lib. 14. — “Cento novelle Antiche,” Nov. LXV. — Boccaccio, “Decameron,” X. 1. — Gower, “Con-

fessio Amantis," 1-5. — Morlini, Nov. V., "De summo Pontifice Sisto." — Pauli's "Schimpf und Ernst."

The first part of this fable has some resemblance to an episode found in "Fortunatus Siculus," by Busone d'Agubbio, vol. ii., cxvii. In the "Gesta Romanorum," a lady is put to the ordeal by choice, and is asked to select one of three caskets, an episode which probably suggested to Shakespeare the parallel one in the "Merchant of Venice." In Dunlop's "History of Fiction," vol. ii., p. 139, is a valuable note dealing with diverse versions of the story.

Night the Thirteenth.

THE FIRST FABLE.

Maestro Gasparino —

Sources. "Poggii Facetiz," II. — Morlini, Nov. LXXVII., "De medico qui curabat mente captos."

THE SECOND FABLE.

One Diego —

Sources. Fabliau, "Les trois Aveugles de Compiègne," Montaignon, "Recueil général," i. 70. — Morlini, Nov. XIII., "De Hispano qui decepit rusticum monachumque Carmelitanum." — Sozzini, Nov. I.

THE THIRD FABLE.

A German and a Spaniard —

Source. Morlini, Nov. VI., "De Theotonico et Hispano simul comedentibus."

THE FOURTH FABLE.

Fortunio —

Source. Morlini, Nov. XXI., "Aromantarii famulus."

This is one of the numerous stories illustrating the blunders of the well-meaning fool. Basile, "Pentamerone," I. 4, is of the same class, as are No. 190, Pitré, "Fiabe, Novelle e Racconti," and two stories in "La Novellaja fiorentina," Imbriani, p. 545. Pitré, in the "Bibliotheca delle Tradizioni popolari," iv., pp. 291, 444, gives two other versions. See also Gonzenbach, "Sicilianische Märchen," No. 37. Max Müller, "Chips from a German Workshop," vol. ii., p. 234, gives a parallel story from the "Pantcha Tantra," and there is another in "Icelandic Legends," translated by Powell and Magnússon (London, 1866).

THE FIFTH FABLE.

Vilio —

Source. Morlini, Nov. XX., "De Cerdone qui insidiantem latronem eum interfectorum interfecit."

In Bebelius, "Facetiæ," there is a similar story, "De quodam Carbonaro."

THE SIXTH FABLE.

Lucietta —

Sources, Imitations, and Parallels. Morlini, Nov. XXIX., "De matre quæ desidiosum filium ut reperiret bonum diem misit." — "The Story of the Charcoal Burner," in Dasent's "Tales from the Fjeld." — "Fiabe Mantovani," Visentini, No. 41. "Gambara." See also Grimm, No. 98, "Dr. Knowall;" and Benfey, "Pantcha Tantra," i. 374; Gonzenbach, "Sicilianische Märchen," No. 57; and Imbriani, "Novellaja Milanese," Nov. X.; Sir John Malcolm's "Sketches of Persia," chap. xx.

The earliest version of this fable is probably the one in the "Kathā Sarit Sāgara." See Tawney's translation, b. vi., ch. 30. There is another in Bebelius, "Facetiæ" (1506).

THE SEVENTH FABLE.

Giorgio —

Source. Morlini, Nov. LXXIV., "Argutus famulus."

This story refers rather to the perverse than to the stupid servant. Pitré, "Fiabe, Novelle e Racconti," No. 156, gives several similar stories, as does Sacchetti, Nov. XXVII.

THE EIGHTH FABLE.

Gasparo —

Source. Morlini, Nov. LIX., "De rustico qui, condito sacello, rhetorem præsentavit."

THE NINTH FABLE.

A certain damsel —

Source. Morlini, Nov. XXII., "De Hermaphrodita."

THE TENTH FABLE.

Cesare —

Sources. Morlini, Nov. LXVIII., "De jurista qui tenebat sententias in filzis." — "Poggii Facetiæ," CCIII.

THE ELEVENTH FABLE.

A poor novice —

Source. Morlini, Nov. LIV., "De Sirentino adone qui inspireto puellam depudavit." The likeness between these two stories is not very close.

THE THIRTEENTH FABLE.

Pietro Rizzato —

Source. Morlini, Nov. LI., "Asotus juvenis."





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